# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

N

INDEX BUREAU

775.00/3

SEE 875.00/298 FOR # 48

FROM Albania ( Bernstein ) DATED July 31, 1930.

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

a conversation with King Zog in which he expressed his views on a number of matters including Albania's relations with the rest of the world, particularly with Greece, Italy, and Yugoslavia.

mb/

Tirana, Albania,

No. 48. July 31,1930.

Strictly Confidential.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report the substance of an hour's informal talk with King Zog on July 30, in the Royal Bathing Pavilion, at Durazzo. As we sat down, he said he had stopped smoking for awhile, as he was suffering from bronchitis. After ordering Turkish coffee, offering me a cigarette, and exchanging a few conventional remarks, King Zog said:

"Albania is a small country, and I have to work very hard to build it up. I have no time for rest.

One

One of my most difficult problems is to find people to whom I could delegate some of the more important work. We are suffering from a lack of capable and responsible men. However, I understand that other countries, much greater than ours, are suffering from this handicap as well. I have read complaints on this ground in the European and American press. I have in my present cabinet two men who were my opponents, my enemies, - I have taken them into the cabinet because I believed they might be able to render useful service to the state. I am trying very hard to utilise the best available material in man power, but we are extremely poor in this respect. Nevertheless we are doing the best we can to build and strengthen our independence as a state. Italy is assuring me that she wants nothing in Albania but to safeguard and help our independence. Mussolini and Grandi have given me such assurances, and I believe that as long as Mussolini lives, as long as he remains in power, he will keep his word. I have found him to be a man of his word. He keeps his promises. Thus far Italy has been quite correct in her attitude toward Albania.

"Yugoslavia also assures me through her Minister here, that her only interest in Albania is to help us remain independent. If we can depend on the sincerity of both these nations, I am happy, for the only thing that Albania wants is to make our independence secure. I have told the Italian Minister and also the Yugoslav

Minister

Minister that if Italy and Yugoslavia have any differences to settle, in war or in peace, they should do it not on Albanian territory. Italy and Yugoslavia have their own boundaries, and if they must settle their own grievances, they should settle them there. Albania wants peace, and an opportunity to upbuild herself economically. If either of these countries is willing to help us, or if both are willing to help us, well and good. We shall be very appreciative. But we are not asking them to do this, because we do not want to be under obligations to any of our neighboring states. I have told the Greek Minister that there was every reason why Greece and Albania should be on most friendly terms, why our differences should be adjusted amicably. I pointed out to him that, like Greece, Albania was neither Slav, nor Latin, nor Mahommedan- that our common interests lay in friendly relations and co-operation. After all, Greece is also a small country, as compared with other European nations, and she should understand this. One thing is absolutely sure. Albania wants peace with all her neighbors, but of course we must guard our independence.

As far as Albania is concerned, she needs cultural development above all else. Our neighbors are even worse off than we are culturally. Our schools, poor as they are, are proportionately better and more numerous than those of Yugoslavia. I am happy that the

Near

Near East Foundation is going to take over two schools - the agricultural school for boys, and the training school for girl teachers in Kavaja and Durazzo. I am especially happy because of the American influence that is thus increasing in our cultural work."

When the topic of our conversation turned to the Briand proposal and Albania's reply, referred to in my despatch No. 44 dated July [illegible], 1930, King Zog said:

"Of course, what I am telling you is confidential. Briand's proposal for the formation of a federal union of European states can hardly be regarded as a serious affair. It must for a long time remain nothing but a dream, a remote ideal, a fine gesture by France to impress the world that she is working for peace. I cannot believe in the seriousness of a proposal made by a nation that is building more battleships and increasing her armed forces while at the same time appealing to the European nations to organize a federal union for peace. There are natural and there are artificial boundaries in Europe. There are too many artificial boundaries, some of which have been sanctioned since the World War- for instance, in Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, and it is impossible to settle the grievances of nations merely by offering them to get together in conference, especially if the most vital grievances are not to be considered at all. I have observed that at these conferences the most difficult problems are usually left unsolved for the next conference, and so on. And

then

then there is an accumulation of the most difficult problems and grievances which cannot be solved or adjusted because there is really not the will to solve them, and because each of the statesmen going to the conference is interested in solving these problems from his own standpoint, and not from the standpoint of the general welfare. That is why I think the United States of Europe as proposed by Briand will remain but an empty dream, a grand gesture made in order that France may some day point to her efforts to unite Europe for purposes of peace."

The King mentioned the John de Kay affair:

"I met him but once. I thought he was a kindly man, but somewhat abnormal. He impressed me as a man of an extraordinary mind, and perhaps his abnormality was due to that. The contract that was made with him by Mehdi Frasheri, Minister of National Economy, was not an all embracing agreement. It was only for certain concessions and undertakings, and a special contract was to be made for each undertaking separately, provided he could show that his corporation had a capital of 300 million dollars to carry out the work. He was presented to me by the Albanian consul in Vienna, through the regular channels, through our Foreign Office."

When I mentioned that I had recently visited the new palace that was being built at Durazzo, King Zog said:

"The palace is almost ready. It has cost us too much. Albania has paid for it about 75,000 napoleons (about $300,000). Mussolini merely presented the gilt ceiling in the throne room. Otherwise everything was paid for by Albania."

Then

then there is an accumulation of the most difficult problems and grievances which cannot be solved or adjusted because there is really not the will to solve them, and because each of the statesmen going to the conference is interested in solving these problems from his own standpoint, and not from the standpoint of the general welfare. That is why I think the United States of Europe as proposed by Briand will remain but an empty dream, a grand gesture made in order that France may some day point to her efforts to unite Europe for purposes of peace."

The King mentioned the John de Kay affair:

"I met him but once. I thought he was a kindly man, but somewhat abnormal. He impressed me as a man of an extraordinary mind, and perhaps his abnormality was due to that. The contract that was made with him by Mehdi Frasheri, Minister of National Economy, was not an all embracing agreement. It was only for certain concessions and undertakings, and a special contract was to be made for each undertaking separately, provided he could show that his corporation had a capital of 300 million dollars to carry out the work. He was presented to me by the Albanian consul in Vienna, through the regular channels, through our Foreign Office."

When I mentioned that I had recently visited the new palace that was being built at Durazzo, King Zog said:

"The palace is almost ready. It has cost us too much. Albania has paid for it about 75,000 napoleons (about $300,000). Mussolini merely presented the gilt ceiling in the throne room. Otherwise everything was paid for by Albania."

Then

Then the King asked me whether I could suggest to him the names of two or three reliable American newspapermen, with one of whom an arrangement might be made for the formation of a Press Department in Tirana, under the supervision of an Albanian. He said that there were no Albanians who were capable of organizing a press department, but that an Albanian would merely supervise the material in order that only authentic information be given out. He said that the foreign press was publishing from time to time distorted accounts of what was going on in Albania, and he was most anxious to have the facts presented accurately, especially in the American press. He then mentioned that the Albanian Government had been approached some time ago with a proposition to have twelve articles about Albania published in the Paris Temps, for a million gold francs. He said that Albania could not make any such arrangement, as Albania was too poor. I told the King that such arrangements could not be made in America, as no responsible, important American newspaper would sell its columns for publicity articles about any country or government. To which the King remarked that he knew that the American newspapers were so rich that they did not need to make such arrangements as had been proposed in behalf of the Paris Temps. I explained to him that that was not the only reason why American newspapers did not practice such methods. I told him that American newspapers would pay for authentic articles if they found them of sufficient interest for American readers. The King said that he

was

was anxious to have American and American capital interested in Albania through the presentation of the facts concerning his country. And it was for that purpose that he was eager to have an efficient Press Bureau established.

Then he spoke of the work of the Rockefeller Institute in Albania as follows:

"Dr. Hackett, of the Rockefeller Institute, and his assistants, have done much to stamp out malaria in Albania. It is a wonderful piece of work they are doing. And I am grateful for it. In fact, I would be willing to turn over all the funds appropriated for health work, about 600,000 gold francs annually, to one of the Rockefeller Foundation representatives. We would be glad to give him complete charge of the health work in Albania, and there would be no interference whatever. For we realize that we have not the men to do this work ourselves. It is a small sum, but I believe that something worth while could be done here by a representative of the Rockefeller Institute. If the Rockefeller Institute could help us by undertaking this work, Albania would be most grateful."

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Herman Bernstein.

HB/ejs

# DOCUMENT FILE

## NOTE

INDEX BUREAU

775.00/4

SEE 760h.75/128 FOR # 57

FROM Albania ( Bernstein ) DATED Aug.14, 1930.

TO NAME

1—1127 e.f.o.

REGARDING:

a conversation with the Yugoslav Minister regarding the Albanian desire to shake off Italian domination and to improve their relations with the neighboring countries especially with Yugoslavia.

mb/

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tirana, Albania.

DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.
LEGAL ADVISER
AUG 4 - 1931
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

No. 296. July 16, 1931.

Confidential.

JUL 30 31
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 5 1931
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUL 31 1931
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

FOR DISTRIBUTION - OFFICE ... No

N/DEW

775.00/5

Office of Economic Adviser
AUG 3 1931
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

775.00

Sir:

I have the honor to report the substance of a talk I had with King Zog at his summer pavilion in Durazzo.

The King said:

"We tried to secure a loan elsewhere, but we saw that we would not succeed. I spoke to the British and French Ministers and to others. But they did not think that the matter could be arranged. Since the World War it became difficult, especially for a small and poor country, to secure a loan through private channels, unless the loan is guaranteed by the Government. Therefore we had to turn to Italy once more. I asked Italy for this loan, and Italy has granted it

note
8.75.51

AUG 7 1931
FILED

no NE
8-3-31
RH

it upon very generous terms. This money will be used for constructive purposes only. As for the Commission which I will appoint, I can assure you that it will not do anything that could in any way affect our independence. We are so jealous of our independence that we will not permit the slightest infringement of it under any circumstances.

"As far as Yugoslavia is concerned, our relations will be friendly. The fact that Italy is our ally and has once more displayed her friendship toward us does not mean that Albania cannot maintain friendly relations with Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs seem to be unable to understand that Albania can maintain friendly relations with Italy and Yugoslavia at the same time. They believe that we must be either friends of Italy and enemies of Yugoslavia, or vice versa.

"Italy has never asked us to do anything against Yugoslavia. During the past few years or during our negotiations for the new loan, not a word was said to me by Mussolini or by his representatives that could be construed as asking Albania to undertake or prepare anything against Yugoslavia.

"The Yugoslavs are certainly not doing anything to promote relations between our countries. Only recently King Alexander issued a decree ordering the expropriation of property owned by Albanians in Yugoslavia and giving it to the Montenegrins. The decree makes an exception

in

in favor of Austrians and Hungarians in Yugoslavia. The Albanians, deprived of their property, of their homes, will want to come to Albania, but what are we going to do with them? We are too poor at this time to take care of them, especially if they come in large numbers.

"The Yugoslav Minister in Albania always says that Yugoslavia wants to maintain a policy of peace with us. But the question of war and peace is not to be decided by Yugoslavia. I am sure that the great powers will prevent the outbreak of a war nowadays.

"Our relations with Greece are improving. There is no reason why we should not be the best neighbors and friends. Our differences can be solved without much difficulty. We are ready whenever Greece is ready to adjust these differences. I understand that Venizelos is in favor of an immediate solution of these questions, but his Minister for Foreign Affairs is not so well disposed toward Albania for some reason, and he may have caused the delay in our negotiations.

"The League of Nations is not doing enough to adjust the dreadful European situation. I regard the politicians in the League of Nations as parasites. Perhaps they could have been useful in other occupations, in schools, in the professions or in business, but the results of their efforts in the League are of no value. They seem to be doing nothing, for they are accomplishing nothing. They are afraid to take up the vital problems that must be solved if stability is to be restored in the world.

"President

"President Hoover is the savior of Europe. America alone could do more to prevent wars and to adjust the world than all other powers together working through the League. France is always ready to block any humanitarian move for peace and stability in Europe. France still imagines herself in the Napoleonic period, although she is now guided by very small politicians. But no matter how hard they tried, they could not impose the will of France against that of the rest of the world, when Mr. Hoover made the proposal to save Germany and through Germany the whole of Europe.

"If the coming Disarmament Conference will not result in definite measures for disarmament in every land, the situation of the world will remain tragic, even if the economic situation should improve by that time. But I believe that the United States will again take the lead and force the other nations to agree to a policy of substantial disarmament.

"We intend to reduce our own military budget to 12 million gold francs next year. This year it is 15 millions. My plan is to have a large militia instead of a regular army. It will cost us less and serve the same purpose."

Note 875.20

Then King Zog said that he would be happy if American capitalists became interested in some Albanian enterprises. Among the profitable undertakings he mentioned the building of a casino on the Durazzo strand and said that he would be willing to grant a concession for a gambling resort.

Note 875.4062

With

With regard to the King's statement about King Alexander's decree affecting Albanians in Yugoslavia, Foreign Minister Vrioni said:

"I have heard about the recent decree of King Alexander of Yugoslavia, which relates to certain agrarian reforms. I have had no official report on this subject and what I say is based upon press and other reports, and represents my own views only.

"It seems that the decree provides for the expropriation of land owned by foreigners in Yugoslavia. Certain exceptions are made in the application of the decree. Austrian and Hungarian owners are in the excepted class. It is estimated that there are about 800.000 Albanians in Yugoslavia, many of whom owned some land along the border region. The decree is directed mainly against these. This will, of course, create an unfavorable impression in Albania and the Albanian Government will find it necessary, if the reports are true, to resist these measures with all its strength.

"The methods of dispossessing Albanian land-owners in Yugoslavia are not of recent application. Prior to the decree about which I am speaking, other measures have been employed to dispossess Albanian citizens from their land and to put Montenegrins or other Yugoslav nationals on the little farms owned by Albanians, who are finally compelled to abandon their land because of the resulting friction. Sometimes the Albanians are dispossessed by having their taxes increased, a little

at

at a time, until a point is reached where the owners cannot pay the amount due and they then abandon their property.

"I repeat I do not speak officially about the decree which, it is reported, was recently issued by King Alexander. I have not yet received any official report on this subject."

When I asked the Yugoslav Minister, Nastassievitch, about this recent decree, he replied that he had not heard about it. Two days later Nastassievitch informed me that in asnwer to an inquiry at Belgrade he was assured that no such decree had been issued. He added that such a decree could not have been kept secret, and the Albanian Minister at Belgrade would surely have informed his government about it if it were true.

As for the Greco-Albanian relations, to which King Zog referred, I am informed by the Greek Minister, Kollas, that he is extremely disappointed and that his Government is displeased with the delay caused by the Albanian Government. Kollas says that he was instructed several months ago to ask the Albanian Government to appoint a commission for the purpose of adjusting the land question affecting Albanians in Greece. He was assured repeatedly by the Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and also by the King, that such a commission would be appointed without delay. He said that at the suggestion of the Albanian Government, it was agreed that payment for the confiscated land was to be made to the Albanian Government and

Note
368.7553

and that the Albanian Government would distribute the money to the individuals concerned. Now, however, the Albanian Government has changed its mind and wants the Greek Government to pay the individual Albanians in Greece directly. During the past few months, he said, while the negotiations for the new Italian loan were proceeding, the attitude of the Albanian Government toward the plan of adjusting the Greco-Albanian differences seems to have undergone a marked change, and the Albanians do not appear to be interested in arriving at a solution of a problem which affects them more than it affects Greece.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome and E. I. C.

HB:KK

4 Carbon Copies
Received K.H.C.

1 copy detached for notes. D.E.C.

1 carbon in + out
EA - Dry Aug. 3

PM RECD

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

July 31, 1931.

No. 308.

Confidential.

DEPT. OF STATE DIV. COM. & REC.

AUG 15 31

Office of Economic Adviser
AUG 25 1931
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 26 1931
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 17 1931
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK Yes No
To the Field
In U. S. A.

No DISTRIBUTION

775.00/6

775.00

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Hussein Vrioni, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vrioni is a typical functionary of the old Turkish régime- sly, evasive, talkative without saying anything, ready to lie without hesitation. Vrioni's predecessor, Rauf Fitso, was a cheerful, artistic liar, interesting and resourceful. Vrioni is crude and dull. All the diplomats here are agreed that it is a waste of time to talk with him at the weekly conferences, for he never gives straightforward information on any subject,

FILED
AUG 27 1931

Confidential File

subject, and very often he distorts facts.

When I asked him whether there was any further exchange of notes between Albania and Italy regarding the new loans, he replied:

"In regard to the loan, all the Notes between this Ministry and the Italian Legation and the Royal Decree on the Regulations of the Special Commission have been made public. There are no other notes."

Vrioni apparently did not know that the Italian Legation had given me and the British Minister copies of the Notes in Italian, signed by Vrioni and di Soragna, which have not been made public. (A translation of these notes is given with my despatch No. 304 of July 30.)

In answer to my inquiry whether he had already seen the Decree by King Alexander of Yugoslavia regarding Albanians in that country, of which both King Zog and Vrioni spoke to me several weeks ago (referred to in my despatch No 296 of July 16.), Vrioni said:

"It must be true that King Alexander of Yugoslavia signed a decree taking away the property of Albanians in that country. That is what my information says. Three days ago I received something on this subject, but I have not read it yet because it is in Serbian. I am having a translation made of the document. It will be ready in a few days."

Nastassievitch, the Yugoslav Minister, assures me that no such decree was issued. He says that he inquired of Minister for Foreign Affairs Marinkovitch who informs him definitely that no such Decree had been issued.

Nastassievitch

Nastassievitch adds that it would be impossible to conceal such a Decree, and that if there were such a Decree, the Foreign Office in Tirana would have received the text from the Albanian Minister in Belgrade long ago. He branded the story as a clumsy fabrication.

Asked about the progress of Greco-Albanian relations, Vrioni replied:

"You have doubtless seen in this morning's newspapers the report from Athens to the effect that fifty Albanian soldiers were killed in order to conceal the plans of newly constructed fortifications. Of course, this report is a deliberate falsehood. Every time our neighbors on the South and the North hear of a step of progress made in Albania, they broadcast stories that an attempt on the life of our King was made, that a revolt has broken out in Albania, and other false news. This shows how our neighbors love us.

"I am receiving telegrams from Greece telling me of the misery of the Albanians in that country. I have kept the Greek Minister in Tirana informed of these reports, but nothing is being done to improve the condition of the Albanians in Greece. In regard to Greco-Albanian relations, we have been expecting to be informed by the Greek Minister that he had received instructions to enter into negotiations with us regarding the problems to be solved, but thus far no instructions were received by him."

The Greek Minister, Kimon Collas, formerly Chargé d'Affaires here, has been waiting now for almost five weeks to present his credentials to the King. Collas has told me several times that he is disgusted with the changed attitude toward Greco-Albanian problems ever since Vrioni

Vrioni has become Minister for Foreign Affairs. He said that the Greek Government was anxious to arrive at an understanding with the Albanian Government, that Venizelos in particular was eager to have the Greco-Albanian differences adjusted, that he asked for the appointment of an Albanian Commission to be sent to Athens, that the King had promised him such a commission would soon be appointed, and that Mehmed Konitza was asked by the King whether he would be willing to accept the chairmanship of such a commission. But according to Collas, ever since Vrioni entered the Cabinet, all sorts of obstacles have been placed by him to obstruct the progress of Greco-Albanian negotiations.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copy to Athens and Belgrade.

HB/SJS
710.

5 Carbon Copies
Received JM

one copy in Dc R for notes.
G.W.

4 carbons in & out EA
Aug 24 LEH

3 carbons
destroyed
8-27-31 gu.

PM RECD

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

October 21, 1931.

No. 360.

Confidential.

NOV. 4

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 19 1931
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 9 1931
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

775.00/7

FOR DISTRIBUTION

copy to MID

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 19 1931
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

775.00

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Mehdi Frasheri, former Cabinet member and now President of the Council of State, regarding the attitude of the neighboring states toward Albania.

Referring to the new Italian "loan" and to Mussolini's policy here, Mr. Frasheri said:

"As I am not a member of the new Loan Commission and as the Commission is just beginning its work, I cannot say how readily Italy is complying with the Albanian Government's

Note
875.51
765.75

NOV 2 1931

MONE
11/19/31
RH

Government's requests for funds. But I do not see how Italy can decline these requests. As you know, the loan is not a loan at all. It is a gift to the nation with which Italy wishes to maintain friendship and whose sympathy it seeks to win in order to prevent any other foreign influence in Albania. It is distinctly understood that no interest is to be paid on this so-called loan and that Albania may repay Italy a purseful when it will have a sackful. If it is the purpose of Italy in making this gift to help a friendly nation, an ally, in order to influence it, it would be folly on Italy's part to irritate the Albanian Government by failing to comply with its reasonable requests. The more obstacles the Italians will place in the way of Albania's securing the required funds in time, the more intense will become the antagonism of the Albanian people toward Italy. I think Mussolini understands this.

"I believe that Mussolini's policy in regard to Albania is unlike that of his predecessors. He seems to have a clear conception of Albania's geographical and political position, and he is working according to a well-defined plan. The length of the Albanian sea coast touches both the Otranto Channel and the Channel of Corfu. If Albania were occupied by another power or if it were in the sphere of influence of another power than our ally across the Adriatic, Italy would find it impossible to protect its own coast. By the modern methods of warfare, an enemy power in Albania can easily bottle up the Adriatic. The logical thing for Italy is to occupy Albania. This, however, she cannot do because

other

other nations would not permit it. But if Italy were permitted to do it, she would have to maintain a standing army of 350,000 men to govern this little country, as she did during the world war. Mussolini knows from history that no nation which occupied this little country was able to leave it without having paid dearly for the attempt to dominate it. The best and cheapest way for Italy to attain the purpose of protecting its own interests in the Adriatic is to help Albania and to prevent other foreign influences from taking root in our country. To do this Italy must aid Albania to maintain internal order, to build roads, railroads, bridges, harbors and other means of communication, and to improve our sources of production. Italy must pay for all these and thus enable the Albanians themselves to keep up an army to maintain order in the land and to check other foreign influences. Compared with what it would have cost Italy to occupy this little country, if she were permitted to do it, her financial aid to Albania under the present arrangement is an insignificant expenditure."

Speaking of the Balkan conference and of the projected Balkan Federation, Frasheri said:

"No sane person could be opposed to a Federation of the Balkan States. But those dealing with this problem should be animated by a spirit of righteousness, if the goal is to be attained. Unfortunately for the Balkans, it cannot be said that such a spirit of righteousness prevails among those who are expected to form the Federation.

"To begin with Yugoslavia's attitude toward Albania: The Vilayet of Kossovo, which extends from Uskub to the

Bosnian

770 001 - Pary Balkan Union

760 h.75
660 h.4016 - Albanians

Bosnian frontier, has a vast Albanian majority. There are under Yugoslav yoke 850,000 Albanians, Roman Catholics and Moslems, who are not permitted to have a single Albanian school. They are robbed of their natural right to their mother tongue. But there are worse things happening to them. The Yugoslav Government maintains in that region a secret gendarmerie. These gendarmes spy on the Hungarians, the Bulgarians and the Albanians, but the Hungarians are treated less harshly than the others, because Hungary is a nation of eight million people. In the Albanian regions of Yugoslavia the secret gendarmerie, paid from the Yugoslav budget, is watching for Albanians who display nationalist sentiments for their native land. It often happens that such an Albanian is shadowed when he leaves the town either to till his land or on the way to market, and is shot by one of the gendarmes. An inquiry is then conducted by the authorities and some other Albanian who may have quarreled with the victim in the past is arrested, charged with the murder, tried and hanged. Thus other innocent Albanians are also disposed of.

"About four years ago thirteen Albanian Roman Catholic priests were arrested and held for a long time without trial in a military prison. The Yugoslavs accused these priests of endeavoring to introduce a foreign influence into the country because of their relations with the Vatican. To force the Albanians to leave Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavs bring Montenegrins and Serbs from the rockiest sections of Yugoslavia and settle them upon land owned by Albanians. The new settlers are authorized to occupy and cultivate three

fourths

fourths of the property of the Albanians, and are permitted to carry rifles and to shoot the Albanians if they attempt to drive them away from their land. In many instances, the water is taken away from the Albanians by the new settlers. Many Albanians have been murdered by these new settlers, and there is not a single example of such a criminal having been punished by the Yugoslav authorities. It is always the Albanians who are blamed.

"Those Albanians who are forced to emigrate are encouraged to go to Turkey. They are not permitted to return to Albania. In Turkey these Albanians are lost. How can an agreement be reached with neighbors who pursue such tactics?

"Now comes Greece. There are 200,000 Christian Orthodox Albanians in the South. This number includes a few thousand Grecophones and some Kutso-Vlachs. The Kutso-Vlachs have been assimilated with the Albanians through intermarriage. Greece claims that these two hundred thousand Christian Orthodox are Greeks. According to the Greek mentality, every Orthodox is a Greek and every Greek an Orthodox. The Greeks believe that true Christianity is identical with Hellenism only. But there is no Hellenism in Albania. Under the Turkish domination an artificial Hellenism existed here because the Turks permitted only Turkish and Greek schools in Albania. The Moslems attended the Turkish schools and were known as Turks, while the Christians went to the Greek schools and were considered Greeks. The Greek influence prevailed among the Christians because all the bishops were Greeks. The language of the

Church

Church was Greek. But as soon as our true national movement was organized, this artificial Hellenism disappeared.

"The Greeks are placing all sorts of obstacles in the way of the Albanian Autocephalus Orthodox Church. They have tried to make it servile to the Partriarchate in order to have pretexts for interfering with our internal affairs. By declining to recognize the Albanian Church they hope to keep up the antagonism between the Albanian Christians and the Albanian Moslems. But that is a thing of the past. With the exception of Premier Venizelos, this is the attitude of all Greeks, beginning with the Greek President and ending with the lowest gendarme.

"Is it possible to reach an understanding with a nation which persists in such a narrow-minded attitude toward our country?

"The Balkans are volcanic. The way to maintain peace and order here is by force of arms. It cannot be denied that a Federation of the Balkan States is a vital necessity. It would save them economically and politically. But the true will to federate is still absent."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade
and Athens.

HB/SJS
710

Received JM

Kn

Copy detached for notes. Kn

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

No. 378. October 27,1931.

Strictly Confidential.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 24 1931
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

FOR DISTRIBUTION - Yes No

No Distribution

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 18 1931
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

775.00/8

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

775.00

I have the honor to report a conversation with King Zog in the course of which he talked about the European situation, the League of Nations, the position of Albania and the attitude of her neighbors, Premier Laval's visit to President Hoover, and the Balkan Conference.

NOV 30 1931

King Zog appears to be in good physical condition. In fact, he looks much better than two months ago, when he received the diplomatic corps on the third anniversary of the Monarchy.

Confidential File.

yes NE
11/24/31
RH

After an exchange of greetings, he remarked that he had been a bit lazy during the summer and was now glad to take up the enormous amount of work that had accumulated.

Referring to the present European situation, King Zog said:

"What a pity that England has been so terribly affected by the general European crisis! Her weakened prestige has already led to unfortunate results in Europe. And the Chino-Japanese conflict could have been stopped more effectively if England had not suffered the recent loss of prestige. Before that time it was the United States of America and Great Britain that could halt any threatening conflict. Now it is the United States alone.

740.00

"The League of Nations may have a little influence outside of Europe. But in Europe the intrigues and political blocs make it impossible for the League to exert any influence whatever. Besides, the various representatives are there for the purpose of gaining advantages for their own countries, for their own groups. In my opinion it would be much better for the world, if the delegates to the League of Nations were elected by the people, instead of being chosen by the governments. Then the delegates to the League would be sure to work for peace, expressing the will of the people and not merely of their governments.

"The Hoover-Laval conference is of the utmost importance to the world. I hope that something big will be accomplished. But unfortunately there is every evidence that France is continuing to arm herself. She is not only increasing her armaments,

Note
033.5111

armaments, but also hoarding enormous food supplies. The food she is accumulating cannot last for more than a year or two without being spoiled. She is also accumulating an enormous gold supply. All this means either preparation for war or an attempt to dominate Europe without war,- by intimidation. If Europe accepts France's domination and dictation, it may be quiet for some years to come, provided the other nations do her bidding. Otherwise war is inevitable.

"I am keenly disappointed that Laval went to Washington alone. There would have been cause for greater hope for a satisfactory outcome of the conference if Briand were also present. But the French did not want Briand to go to Washington, fearing that he might commit France to an understanding with the United States which would transcend her national interests and advantages. It is very significant that Briand did not accompany Laval. Besides, Laval represents only a small group in France."

Speaking of Albania, King Zog said:

"Albania is a little state. It cannot afford trouble or war. We would lose all in the event of a new war. If Italy were to wage a war and be defeated, she might lose a certain portion of her territory. If Yugoslavia were involved in another war, she might lose a province or two. But Italy would remain Italy, and Yugoslavia would remain Yugoslavia. Albania, however, would lose everything.

"Italy has helped us financially, and has thus far been very correct with us. She has never demanded anything that might

might affect our national independence or territorial integrity. What she may do tomorrow, I cannot say. But this I can assure you, if Italy should attempt to impose on us conditions that would jeopardize our independence, she will find herself firmly opposed by every Albanian.

"As for Yugoslavia, we are on neighborly terms with her. The only thing that stands between our friendship is the question of the minorities. We are not asking for a university for the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia. We are not asking even for primary schools for our people there. All we ask is that our people there be accorded human rights, that the Yugoslavs stop murdering them, that they cease driving them away from their homes in order to make room for Montenegrins. When our people in Yugoslavia are deprived of their property and forced to return to Albania, we are too poor to support them. I have just been informed that we need right now the sum of 400,000 gold francs for these returned Albanians who were stripped of all their belongings in Yugoslavia. But where am I to get this sum?

"The 100,000,000 gold francs we are receiving from Italy is of great help to us. Ours is a small country. The needs of our people are small. You have seen how our people work, how modestly they live. You have seen many of them coming to town from the villages and hills barefooted, because they have no shoes. They sleep on the floor, because they have no beds. You cannot find such a condition anywhere in Europe today. If our people have work, if they have bread and cheese, they are content and happy. This year, because of lack of rain and extremely poor crops, our people haven't

haven't enough bread, and the government is doing all in its power to supply bread to those in need.

"I have heard rumors of a better understanding between France and Italy. I doubt whether there is any truth in these reports. They may perhaps reach a friendly agreement for certain purposes, but I cannot believe that they will become sincere friends. Their interests are so conflicting. When Italy supported France in opposing the Austro-German Customs Union, it was solely because Italy feared the Anschluss which would have followed the Customs Union. Italy does not want the Germans in Trieste.

"If Italy and France should come to an understanding regarding disarmament, or rather naval parity, they may perhaps reduce their navies, but they will increase their air forces. That would be just as bad, if not worse.

"I am not afraid of war here in the near future. I would say that if the chances for war and peace were placed in a scale, those for peace would slightly outweigh the others at the present time.

"War can break out in Albania only if Yugoslavia starts it. We are too weak to defend ourselves. Italy would come to our help. Italy cannot land any troops in Albania without our request. If Yugoslavia does not undertake anything against Albania, there can be no outbreak of a war here. Italy has no interest to commence any trouble in Albania. I believe that Yugoslavia does not want any war with us. After all, our differences are comparatively slight. It is only the question of the minorities. And we are not insisting on the immediate solution of that problem. The question will be

solved

solved between Yugoslavia and Albania when the question of minorities is settled elsewhere in Europe.

"The Balkan Conference cannot be expected to yield any positive results in the immediate future. I have just received a telegram from Istanbul, informing me that Konitza spoke about the minorities, and the Yugoslav delegate not only attacked Konitza, but also made most offensive remarks about Albania as an Italian colony. Konitza gave a sharp answer, and the Yugoslav delegation was compelled to retract its abusive statements. It is always the question of the minorities that separate us. But in time the Balkan Conference may lead to a better understanding and closer cooperation among the Balkan states."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade and
E.I.C.

HB/SJS
710

Carbon Copies
Received F.P.

1 copy in D of R for notes
G.W.

2 carbons destroyed 11-30-31 SJS

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

No. 420. December 31,1931.

Confidential.

JAN 15 32

EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 3 1932
COPY IN
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 2 1932
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 10 1932
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

775.00/9

FOR DISTRIBUTION - ... No
To th...
In ...

Copy to MID
CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 5 - 1932
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

775.00

FEB 15 1932

FILED

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that Mehmed Konitza, the President of the Albanian Delegation to the Balkan Conference, is leaving for Sofia this week for the purpose of elaborating an agreement with Bulgaria regarding the question of minorities, in accordance with the recommendation of the Balkan Conference that this problem be adjusted among the various delegations before the next annual Balkan Conference.

note 770 Istanbul - 1931

As soon as it became known that Mr. Konitza was going to Sofia, rumors began to circulate to the effect that the King was sending him to negotiate a Pact of

Friendship

Friendship between Albania and Bulgaria.

Mr. Konitza gave me the following explanation regarding his trip to Bulgaria:

860H.4016 - Bulgaria
860 H.4016 - Albania
860 H.4016
860H.4016

"The purpose of my visit to Sofia is simple. We want to reach a definite understanding about the question of minorities with Bulgaria first. We ask for our minority in Yugoslavia even less than Bulgaria does. Bulgaria wants schools for her minority in Yugoslavia, while we merely ask that the Albanians there be accorded the most elementary human treatment. After we shall have signed a pact with Bulgaria concerning this question, we intend to take the matter up also with Turkey and Greece. Yugoslavia will be the last we shall approach. Rumania does not want to be considered as a Balkan state, but on the question of minorities she sides with Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia will be isolated if she refuses to co-operate with the other Balkan states in this most vital matter. What France and Yugoslavia really fear is that this understanding may lead to a series of pacts between Italy, Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Austria, Hungary, Germany and Soviet Russia. France, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia would be powerless against such a combination.

EE

"When I received the invitation to come to Sofia, I accepted it immediately in an open telegram which was sent from the Prime Minister's office. My telegram was very cordial. That was sufficient for many people in Tirana to jump at the conclusion that a pact of friendship was under consideration. Within a few hours they were talking about the significance of the new pact. Various Legations,

particularly

particularly the French, Yugoslav and Czechoslovakian, became extremely uneasy about my sudden visit to Sofia. The Yugoslav Minister called on me and urged me not to go to Sofia now as, in his opinion, this was an inopportune time to raise the question of minorities. The French and the Yugoslavs believe Italy is behind some scheme to bring Albania and Bulgaria into closer relations. The Italians themselves are at a loss to understand what it is all about. And the Italian Minister is now in the peculiar position that he cannot ask the King, for the King has not received him since November 26, when the Italian Minister demanded the renewal of the Pact of Tirana."

The Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Christo D. Minkoff, called at the Legation and spoke of Konitza's trip to Bulgaria. He described its purpose along the lines of Konitza's explanation, but added that perhaps later on a pact of friendship between Albania and Bulgaria may also be signed. He pointed out that the interests of the Albanians and the Bulgarians with regard to their minorities in Yugoslavia were identical. He said that the problems of Kossova and of Macedonia must be adjusted before the Balkan Conference can even hope for any progress on the road toward a Balkan federation. If the minorities question in these territories is solved satisfactorily, Mr. Minkoff remarked, the Balkans may become the most peaceful part of Europe. But without such solution, the Balkans will remain the gravest danger zone of Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

4 Carbon Copies
Received F.E.
1 copy in D.G.R. - L.E.B.

Copies to Rome, E.I.C.
and Sofia.

HB/sjs-/710

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

SEE 875.51/116 FOR #465

FROM Albania ( Bernstein ) DATED March 1,1932

TO NAME 1—1127

REGARDING: Albanian foreign relations.
Conversation with King Zog concerning Albanian friendship for America, and Albanian desire to continue on friendly terms with Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece.

775.00/10

leb

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 23 1932
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

No. 556. Tirana, July 28, 1932.

Confidential.

AUG 10 32

SUBJECT: Talk With Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hussein Vrioni, Criticizing the Yugoslav and Greek Governments and Press.

FOR DISTRIBUTION

775.00
note
760H.75
765.75
768.75

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 11 1932
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hussein Vrioni, on July 20th, in the course of which he talked bitterly about the Yugoslavs and the Greeks. He started out by saying that while everything was moving ahead normally and all was quiet within the country, the press of Albania's neighbors was publishing inventions against Albania and declining to make public any of the denials sent out by the Albanian Government.

"As illustrations, I may mention the following incidents," said Vrioni. "Some time ago the Albanian Archbishop Vissarion visited Bucharest to attend a conference of the churches for the maintenance of peace

775.00/11
FILED
AUG. 2, 1932.

peace in Balkans. Immediately upon his arrival there the press of Yugoslavia and of Greece commenced the publication of anti-Albanian inventions. The Greek press was instigated by the Metropolitan of Athens. The Greek newspapers wrote that Vissarion was in Bucharest to seek the recognition of the Albanian Church by the Roumanian Church. The Roumanian Patriarch gave an impressive reception in honor of Vissarion and expressed his sympathies toward the Albanian Church, but the question of recognition was not mentioned. We sent out a statement denying that Vissarion's visit to Roumania was in any way connected with the question of recognition of the Albanian Church, but the Greek newspapers did not publish our statement.

"Recently, the VREME of Belgrade, published a news item in its issue of July 4th, stating that Albanian nationalists in Valona attacked Italian fascists and that two fascists and one Italian officer were killed. This story is without the slightest foundation. We have no Italian officers at Valona, excepting the organizer of the Youth Movement (Enti Kombëtar). We sent out a statement denying this story published in the Vreme, but our statement was never published.

"The Yugoslav press is continually attacking Albania, but whenever a newspaper in Albania publishes a mild and harmless article of criticism

directed

directed against Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav Government lodges a protest with our Government. The Yugoslav Minister comes to me and demands to know why we permit such anti-Yugoslav articles to appear in our press, though the Yugoslav newspapers persist in spreading false information about Albania. The real trouble is that there is no central authority in Yugoslavia. I told the former Yugoslav Minister, Nastassievitch, that in my opinion his Government had no definite, fixed policy, and that every Governor in the provinces acted according to his own whims and often in violation of the wishes of the central Government. Nastassievitch understood the danger of the anti-Albanian campaign of falsification in the Yugoslav press, and he tried to stop such propaganda, but unfortunately his attitude was not that of his Government. The present Yugoslav Minister, M. Gjonovitch, also understands it very well, and as he was himself a journalist, he wrote personal letters to various Yugoslav newspapers, requesting them to cease the newspaper campaign against Albania, and to publish the denials sent out by our Press Bureau. I am told that he received word that the attacks on us would be stopped and that our statements would be published whenever we wished to make corrections in the Yugoslav press with regard to Albanian news. However, there is no evidence that anything has actually been done in this matter in Belgrade. There are at least two

governments

governments in Yugoslavia. The Minister of the Interior does not cooperate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"When our parliamentary elections take place in the Fall, it will not surprise me in the least if the Yugoslav and Greek press will broadcast inventions to the effect that a revolution had broken out in Albania."

A moment after criticizing the lack of coordination in the Yugoslav Government between the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vrioni tried to give me the impression that he knew nothing about the death sentence recently imposed by the Albanian Political Court upon Gani and Hasan Kryeziu, Albanian refugees in Yugoslavia, and denied any knowledge of the confiscation of the Italian newspapers which reached Albania and which contained news items about the decision of the Albanian Political Court. His attempts at an explanation were clumsy and ludicrous. Vrioni said:

"I have no knowledge of the Italian newspaper, GAZZETTA DEL MEZZOGIORNO, of Bari, which is said to have been confiscated by the Albanian authorities. I don't know about it because the Press Bureau is not in my Department. It is connected with the Ministry of the Interior. I don't read the Bari newspaper, for it is a journal of secondary importance.

"I don't know about the sentence of the Kryeziu brothers by the Albanian Political Court. (The text of the Political Court's decision appeared in the

Official

Official Gazette of June 23, 1932, No. 39, and a translation of it was given in my confidential despatch, No. 551, of July 14th, 1932). 875.00/343

"Gani and Hasan Kryeziu have lost their national feelings. They have become tools of the Yugoslavs. They are mercenaries. I told the former Yugoslav Minister, Nastassievitch, on one occasion that these two Albanian refugees seemed to have more influence in their province than the Yugoslav Governor. While all the Albanians in Yugoslavia were suffering at the hands of the authorities, while their property was taken from them and they were being persecuted in various other ways, these two men, Gani and Hasan Kryeziu, enjoyed great influence with the Yugoslav authorities. They are continuing their activities there against our country. They are spreading propaganda to the effect that our King is ill and dying, that our régime is weakening and that our Government is about to fall. And they have organized a small band of mercenaries, armed with the help of the Yugoslavs."

Referring to the Greco-Albanian relations, Mr. Vrioni said:

"Our differences with Greece are still unadjusted. We cannot accept the terms offered by the Greek Government in settlement of Albanian property confiscated by the Greek Government because the drachma has fallen in value, and the Greek Government bonds have de-

preciated

preciated by about seventy-five percent. The original offer was absurdly low, but if the Albanians were to accept it now and receive payment in Greek Government bonds at their present value, they would get practically nothing for their property.

"Premier Venizelos told our Minister in Athens recently that he will settle the Greco-Albanian differences shortly after the elections. He said to our Minister that even if he is defeated at the polls, he will use his influence to solve the pending problems between Albania and Greece. This is very strange. If Venizelos cannot use his influence to solve these problems when he is at the head of the Government, how will he be able to do it when he is defeated? It seems to me that Venizelos has already lost his grip on Greek affairs, and from all indications he will be defeated at the coming elections."

Commenting on President Hoover's proposal to the Disarmament Conference, Mr. Vrioni said:

"We look with favor upon President Hoover's proposal. We shall even favor a reduction in armaments by more than one third."

A few hours after I had this conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs Vrioni, the afternoon newspaper BESA contained a leading article about the Yugoslav press. The BESA is published by a group of the more conservative parliamentary deputies and

financed

financed by Abdurahman Krossi, the King's foster father. A translation of this characteristic article is submitted herewith, together with extracts from another article published in the BESA on July 23, 1932, dealing with Greco-Albanian relations.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein

Herman Bernstein.

Enclosures:
Article and
extracts from BESA.

Copies to E.I.C., Rome,
Belgrade and Athens.

4 Carbon Copies
Received

Enclosure No. 1 in Despatch No. 556

dated July 28, 1932 from the American Legation, Tirana, Albania.

(Translation)

From the Besa of July 20, 1932.

---

We regret to reiterate again that the press of our neighbors, both north and south, because of a strange but unmistabkable mentality, has never desired to maintain a just attitude toward our country or to be inspired by the spirit of neighborliness and loyalty. The reasons for this astonishing and harmful attitude are neither phenomenal nor incomprehensible: Extreme chauvinism and insatiable voluptuousness directed against the very cells of our national existence goad the neighboring press to attack. It does not know what it is doing.

How can it be explained otherwise? It seems as though the recent campaign of the Greek press against our country was not enough, and now the Yugoslav press, with its raucous voice, is acting as an accompaniment to the song of the Greek press by inventing the most unspeakable and loathsome things about Albania.

As a reward for our chivalrous attitude in closing our eyes to most shocking events in Yugoslavia we did not expect the praise of the neighboring press, but neither did we expect their customary cries of savage beasts.

What other meaning could this campaign of the Yugoslav press have? For a month it has been using all the force of its imagination to invent and disseminate false news about our country. What is the matter with the VREME of Belgrade and the VECERNA POSTA of Sarajevo that they are giving full speed to this satanic activity of ridiculous invention and fabrication?

In the most critical moments of the political life of the neighboring state, in the most fearful hours of a period when plots to overthrow the government are revealed in Yugoslavia (such as that of Maribor), when officers are executed by the firing squad, and the country is quaking, what is the reason that the Yugoslav newspapers, in their slav spirit and in old outmoded tactics, are serving falsehoods to the world by saying that in our happy and peaceful Albania "bloody engagements are occurring (!) between the peasants and our Italian friends and that near Valona two Italian civilians and an officer have been killed"?

We do not understand this, or if we do understand, we cannot see how it will bring any results of moral or material usefulness to Yugoslavia. There is a long line of such experiments that have miscarried, and the Yugoslav press should have been convinced by now that such campaigns will never contribute to strengthen friendly relations and will not help to obliterate the consequences of the mistaken and violent policy of the past.

Then

Then why this absurdity? Is it to increase the numbers of the adversaries? Would such an increase realize the political ends of Yugoslavia? We do not think so. Then the failure of this renewed method is evident.

If this campaign of fabrications by the Yugoslav press is made for the purpose of diverting the attention of people in revolt and nervousness, this method is doomed to early failure. The daily turbulent events in the Yugoslav state cannot be concealed by these falsehoods; their effect, therefore, will be felt more than before.

If the campaign is not for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of its people but is made to snort out their unlimited hatred against Italy, they are not attaining their end, because the people know and understand that Italy, with its policy of sincere economic, financial and cultural co-operation, is only helping them make their land stronger, happier, more flourishing and more progressive. This noble and generous help by our ally is worthy of the eternal gratitude of our nation and not of the imaginary conflicts and assassinations.

Then why this campaign which results in anger and disgust on the part of our people?

We do not know....let others understand it.

- - - - -

Enclosure No. 2 in Despatch No. 556

dated July 28, 1932 from the American Legation, Tirana, Albania.

Paragraphs from an editorial in the BESA of July 23, 1932, directed against Greece:

"Several days ago we published a sorrowful appeal from our brothers in Greece who are at the height of their sufferings and despair. They described once more their lamentable condition and asked for help to save them from the scythe of death which has been placed at their throats by the Greek government. Without the slightest mercy or hesitation, and in violation of any international engagements, the Greek government is resolved to exterminate them and is carrying out this resolution.

.....

"The Greek government, for reasons connected with its internal policy, has expropriated all the property of Albanians in Greece. We have never made any observation regarding this decision which is a right of its integral and undisputable sovereignty-- but expropriation does not mean robbery. Then why has the Greek government made the two synonymous? If it were its principle and tradition to seize and rob the properties of our brothers, why did it keep them in suspense for the last 19 years? Why did it not make a statement from the beginning that their property belonged to Greece as the conquering power? Why did the Greeks make promises before Albanian delegations and before the League of Nations that they would honor the legitimate rights of Albanians in Greece? We fail to comprehend this mystery. Only Greek mentality can understand it."

The editorial then refers to the modification of Article 89 of the Greek agrarian law which brings the price paid for expropriated land to 60 centimes gold (approximately $0.12) for each 1000 square meters, and to the fact that the Greek government is trying to compel the Albanian owners to accept, in payment, state bonds which have dropped 60%.

Then the article proceeds as follows:

"We know that all nationals of other countries were well paid. Not only nationals of big nations but also of the neighboring countries were favored: To a Yugoslav national, Vasil Kehayayt, who had property in the same regions as the Albanians, the Greek government, upon representations by the Yugoslav government, returned all his expropriated property, retaining only 900 dulums for which the real value was paid.

"Our opinion is that the Albanian owners should refuse to receive payment in bonds. It would be suicide and a

great

great disgrace to our national dignity if they accepted. Better nothing than accept a miserable sum which would only legalize this Greek robbery.

"We should not be discouraged by this irony of fate, for there are many things that we could apply against Greece in retaliation. We shall make use of all these things because our national honor and manly attitude demand it.".....

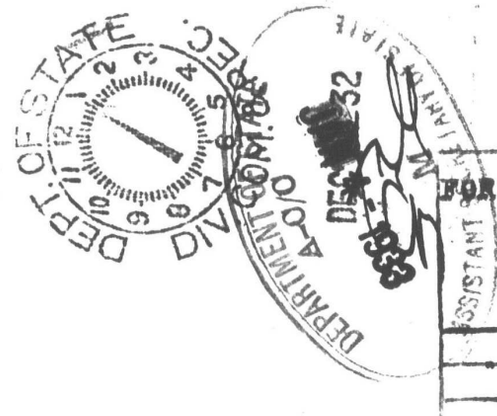
- - - - -

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 616. Tirana, December 2, 1932.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Talks With Premier Evangheli and Minister of Foreign Affairs Vrioni.




FOR DISTRIBUTION

Copy to M.I.D

JAN 5 - 1933

AM. RECD

775.00/12

775.00 note

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report the substance of conversations I had with Prime Minister Pandeli Evangheli and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hussein Vrioni, in which they reviewed briefly the present situation in Albania and the relations with Albania's neighbors.

FILED JAN 18 1933

Prime Minister Evangheli said, in part, as follows:

"Our economic situation is bad. The world economic crisis has also affected Albania. Our crops this year were very good. We have ample corn and wheat. We are

875.50

in...

in the process of concluding certain customs treaties with neighboring countries. We have olives, olive oil, cattle, fish and eggs for export, but we cannot find any markets. We are still selling much of our cheese to the United States. The egg exports brought us from two to three million gold francs annually, but this year that item has fallen to the minimum along with our other exports. It is not that our prices are too high or that there are no markets for our products, but our exports have been reduced to the minimum through the policy adopted by various nations to live only on what is being produced in their own countries.

"Our imports have also declined, not because we have no need for imports, but we cannot afford them. Our economic and financial situation is very bad.

"Our political situation is quite all right. Our relations with our neighbors are cordial. We keep them friendly. Our Ally has conducted itself correctly with regard to the annual loan. Perhaps Italy cannot do certain things for us because it is also suffering from the economic crisis. As you know, political conditions are directly affected by economic conditions.

"It is to be regretted that so many false reports are published about Albania in the foreign press. We are accused of murdering people, of sending bands into our neighbor's territory. It seems to me that we would be accused of these things even if we did nothing but

sleep...

sleep all the time. Those who circulate the false reports about us are our enemies. I cannot understand why the foreign press is so hostile to Albania."

With regard to Greco-Albanian relations and the proposed solution of the problem regarding the confiscated property of Albanians in Greece, the Prime Minister remarked:

"The new Greek Government has expressed a genuine willingness to solve this problem now. When the Greeks had money to pay for the confiscated property they lacked the good will to do it. Now that they have no money, they have the good will. But we shall send a commission to Greece shortly for the purpose of endeavoring to adjust the matter."

Regarding the rumored changes in the Cabinet, the Prime Minister said:

"There may be some truth in the reports that there are to be certain changes in the Cabinet. But those who spread these rumors do not know the facts. It's all guess work on their part. We now have a new Parliament and an old Cabinet. A Cabinet that has been in office as long as mine is in need of a rest. I myself would like to take a rest. But I don't know at this time what is going to happen."

Foreign Minister Vrioni said:

"The only important question between Albania and Greece is the one relating to the confiscated Albanian property in Greece. Like the Venizelos Government, the

new...

new Hellenic Government has expressed a desire for a definite adjustment of the matter. We are therefore planning to send a commission to Greece to make a further study of how best to solve the problem.

"The matter is further complicated now by the drop in the value of the drachma. The original appraisal of our property in Greece was extremely low, but we are not raising this question any more. But at that time the drachma was worth about three hundred to the Napoleon (approximately Four Dollars). Now the value of the drachma has fallen to 700 or 800 to the Napoleon. All we will ask is that the property be paid for at the rate of the drachma at the time the land was appraised. According to my information the drachma will continue to sink. The bonds with which the Greek Government has offered to pay the Albanians for the confiscated property have declined in value about Thirty percent. Besides, if the Albanians wanted to sell these bonds now they would receive practically nothing for their property.

"We also had a difference with Greece with regard to the matter of extradition. It was a question of interpretation. But that has now been settled in a recent exchange of notes.

"The Yugoslav press is treating Albania even more unfairly than several months ago. Both the Yugoslav Minister in Tirana and the Albanian Minister in Belgrade have received assurances from the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs that the anti-Albanian campaign in the Yugoslav press would be stopped, but his assurances seem

760H.75

to...

to be useless. Though we know that the Yugoslav Government has a strict control of the press, the Foreign Minister seems to be powerless in the matter. The Yugoslav press depicts Albania as seething with anarchy. The wildest stories about us are published continually. We no longer bother denying them. The false reports answer themselves within a short time."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade and
Athens.

HB/sjs
800.

4

L. J. M.

1 copy in D. C. & L. E. C.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 645. Tirana, January 27, 1933.

Confidential.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 20 1933
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Conversation with the Roumanian Minister regarding the reported Italo-French negotiations affecting Albania.

AM. RECD
DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.
FEB 833

FOR DISTRIBUTION -
To the field
In U. S. A

775.00/13

775.00
note
751.65

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 9 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with the Roumanian Minister, M. Boundougan, regarding the reported negotiations for a new understanding between France and Italy which might affect Albania.

The Roumanian Minister said:

"I have definite information from our Foreign Minister, M. Titulescu, whom I met in Bucharest recently, that France and Italy are approaching a new understanding, and that France is likely to grant certain concessions to Italy in Tunis and perhaps also in Albania, which would give Italy a free hand here. In that

that case France would undoubtedly tell Yugoslavia to keep her hands off Albania. Roumania would be glad to see a more friendly relationship established between France and Italy. Of course, Yugoslavia, would be bitterly disappointed by such a new arrangement. King Alexander is visiting King Carol just now. It is not merely a social visit. He was invited to come and discuss the serious situation in Yugoslavia and the consequences of an Italo-French understanding.

"This is the time for Albania to take up her problems with the League of Nations. Albania should act before this new arrangement is concluded. She should also endeavor to present her case to the important disinterested powers. Later it may be too late. I have discussed this matter with Premier Evangheli and have advised him to act along these lines."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade
and E.I.C.

4 ... Copies
Received ... I.J.N.

HB/SJS
710

1 copy detached
for note pls

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NE
WE
A-4/C

No. 666. Tirana, February 10, 1933.

Confidential.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 2 - 1933
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 1 1933
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Neutralization of Albania.

AM RECD

DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.

FEB 21 33

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK

Copy to MID

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

MAR 3 - 1933

775.00
note
765 75

775.00/14

MAR 2 - 1933

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 23 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

FILED
MAR 13 1933

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the German Chargé d'Affaires, Dr. von Luckwald, informed me confidentially that the Italian Minister had told him he had heard rumors about a scheme for the neutralization of Albania and that Italy would never permit such an arrangement, no matter who may be behind it, because Italy had too much money and honor at stake in Albania.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade,
and E.I.C.

HB/SJS
710

4

1 copy in D C R

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

775.00/15

SEE 760h.75/176 FOR #661

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Feb.7, 1933

TO NAME 1—1127

REGARDING:

Neutralization of Albania.

Conversation between the Yugoslav Minister and King Zog during which the Minister suggested -. Yugoslav and Italian attitude toward Albania.

Wi

No. 661. Tirana, February 7, 1933.

Strictly Confidential.

SUBJECT: The Yugoslav Minister's Audience with King Zog.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that M. Djonovitch, the Yugoslav Minister, called at the Legation and told me in strictest confidence about his audience with King Zog on Saturday, February 4th. He said that the King asked him not to mention the subject of their conversation to anyone in Tirana, nor to telegraph to the Foreign Office, but rather to write personally only to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The King told him that he would receive him again about two weeks later, and that then he would outline to him what Yugoslavia could do for Albania. Djonovitch said that he wanted

me

me to know about his negotiations with the King, and that he would not divulge any details of his conversation with the King to any of his other colleagues.

Mr. Djonovitch said, in substance, as follows:

"I commenced by telling the King that there was considerable unrest in Northern Albania because General Pariani, his Italian officers and agents were talking freely about an approaching war. Many people have asked me what to do. They fear a new war, and they want to leave Albania before the outbreak of hostilities.

"The King replied that he had received no such reports about any unrest in Albania, and that he would have the matter investigated without delay. Then the King said that he appointed Mr. Djafer Villa as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, who knew Yugoslavia well and who is friendly disposed toward Yugoslavia. He said that M. Villa will adjust all minor differences between Albania and Yugoslavia of which I had complained.

"I expressed the opinion that the only way to assure peace in this part of the world is to guarantee the neutrality of Albania. The King asked why Albania should be the only one of the Balkans and the first to ask for neutralization. I replied that Albania should be the first because Albania is the smallest and the weakest of the Balkan states, and because of the Ambassadors' Agreement in which a foreign power is given the right to interfere in Albania. I said that Albania should be made the Switzerland of the Balkans, for the sake of internal peace, of Balkan peace and of world peace. I said that

Italy

Italy had made two attempts to discuss with Yugoslavia an understanding affecting Albania and that we told the Italians we would do nothing that would infringe upon the independence of Albania. After the second failure to interest us in a scheme to divide Albania into separate zones of influence, Italy commenced her venomous campaign against us. I pointed out to the King that we could not be expected to be more papal than the Pope, that we could not continue to defend Albania's interests, if Albania herself did not make every effort to safeguard her own independence. The King replied that Albania will defend her independence to the last breath, that every Albanian will have to be exterminated before Albania will give up her independence. I remarked to the King that if Italy really desired to help Albania, she would have aided her economically, building roads and bridges for economical and agricultural purposes, and not military roads and bridges and fortifications in the mountains. I asked him against whom these fortifications were being erected. If against us, they are useless. If against Italy, they are still more useless. I said the fortifications are not for Albania, but for Italy, against us. If anyone comes to another's home and builds fortifications for himself, I said, the owner of the house cannot be called independant .

"I advised the King to discuss the question of the neutralization of Albania with some of the other foreign diplomats in Tirana and to ascertain their views. When the question of the Ambassadors' Agreement came up, the

King

King said that Albania never recognized it, and that Albania protested against the Agreement in writing. Then I called the King's attention to the danger that an incident may be created by the Italians at the Albano-Yugoslav frontiers for purposes of provocation, and assured him that we were doing our utmost to prevent any trouble on the part of Albanian emigres on the Yugoslav side of the frontier. I told him that Albania is the powder barrel of the Balkans, and that the Balkans are the powder barrel of Europe and of the world. Finally, I expressed the view that if he addressed himself through the proper channels to the League of Nations, with the fine gesture of requesting that the neutralization of Albania be guaranteed and if Albania also reduced her army to the minimum required for the maintenance of internal order, the League of Nations and the whole world could not fail to heed such a request at this time of universal chaos, when Mussolini, Hitler, Japan and Stalin are menacing the peace of the world."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade
and E.I.C.

HB/SJS
710

A true copy of the signed original.

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

775.00/16

SEE 875.51/144 FOR #692

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Mar.14, 1933

TO

NAME

1—1127

REGARDING: Military understanding or convention between Albania and Italy.

Statement of King Zog to the British Minister that there is no -.

W1

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 751. Tirana, May 18, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: France, the Little Entente and Albania.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 12 1933
DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

MAY 31 33
FOR DISTRIBUTION
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
Copy to M.I.D. Cuba

775.00/17

775.00 note 770.7511

JUN 14 1933

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 1 1933
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
Cuba

FILED
JUN 21 1933

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Dr. Vokaç, the Czechoslovak Chargé d'Affaires, in the course of which he said as follows:

"The French Minister, Baron Degrand, told me that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Djafer Villa, had informed him that Albania was on the point of severing friendly relations with Italy. Villa said the King and Cabinet were considering this step. Then he asked Degrand how such a move would be regarded by other powers, by France, for instance. Degrand answered that such

such a move would indicate that Albania intends to come into closer and more friendly contact with Yugoslavia, with the Little Entente. He said that Rumania was always friendly toward Albania, that Czechoslovakia was seriously working for peace and exerting a good influence on Yugoslavia, thus preventing her from embarking on dangerous adventures. Therefore a closer contact with the Little Entente would be of benefit to Albania. And he added that if Albania co-operated with the Little Entente, France would naturally be very pleased, and might also be helpful.

"The Rumanian Minister, who has recently returned from Bucharest, told me that he had met Titulescu who approved the project of proposing to Albania a Pact of Friendship and Non-aggression with the Little Entente, that Titulescu had already talked with the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Yeftitch, who also approved the plan, but that the matter had not yet been discussed with Dr. Benes. Titulescu told him that he would meet Benes in Prague at the end of May at the Little Entente conference, and would then discuss the proposed plan with him. Titulescu said that for about two or three months nothing must be undertaken with Albania for the reason that Rumania and Italy are about to renew their Pact of Friendship in June, and that if negotiations were started now by the Little Entente with Albania, Italy would regard them as an unfriendly move on the part of Rumania, and may decline to renew the Pact of Friendship. Titulescu, according to Buzdugan, said that shortly after

770.75 11

the

the signing of the Pact of Friendship between Rumania and Italy, the Little Entente would make a proposal to Albania to sign a general Pact of Friendship and Non-aggression, and if not with all the three powers, at least with one of them, as a beginning."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade, E.I.C.,
Prague and Bucharest.

HB/SJS
710

3 Carbon Copies
Received F.P.
1 copy in DCR - FEC.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

THE UNDER SECRETARY
SEP 29 1933
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

September 28, 1933.

Mr. Phillips:

I think you will be interested in glancing over this despatch. It indicates that Italy has been sounding out Great Britain and France, having in mind the possibility that Albania might "take the bit in its teeth" and appeal to the League for help.

Personally, I believe King Zog is too astute to make such a move at this time.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 855. Tirana, September 5, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Reported Recent Assurances by England and France Recognizing Italy's Special Interests in Albania.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SEP 30 1933
DIVISION OF
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
OCT 7 - 1933
MR BULLITT

775.00/18

AM, RECD
DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.
SEP 21 33

Our distribution is CHE No
To the
In U. S. A.
NO DISTRIBUTION

Office of Economic Adviser
OCT 5 1933
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

775.00

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SEP 22 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Mr. Edward H. L. Hadwen, the British Chargé d'Affaires, in which he told me in strict confidence that both the British and the French Governments had given categorical assurances about a month ago to Italy that they would not help Albania with the League of Nations in the event the Albanian Government addressed itself to the League for aid. He said that the British Government had "no scruples, no milk of human kindness in its present attitude toward the Albanian situation, and that it would be quite ready to sell out Albania rather

note
741.75
751.75
765.75
875.51

OCT 12 1933
FILED

rather than irritate and displease Mussolini". He pointed out that because of the secret treaty with Italy in 1915, and because of "the shabby treatment accorded to Italy at the Peace Conference, where Italy was deprived of her share of the spoils", England would not undertake anything that might interfere with Italy's special interests in Albania. He added that if King Zog requested the League for financial assistance, the matter would be considered in a leisurely manner, a commission of experts would be sent to Albania to investigate the situation, and then it would decide that since Italy was the only power that had come to Albania's assistance and since Italy had invested huge sums in Albania, enabling the Albanian Government to build roads, bridges and ports, a way must be found to adjust Italo-Albanian differences so that Italy's special interests be protected and that friendly collaboration between Italy and Albania be resumed.

Dr. Jaroslav Netousek, the Czechoslovak Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, informed me yesterday that the French Government had declared to Italy about a fortnight ago that in view of the Four Power Pact, and the Ambassadors' Agreement of 1921, France would not do anything to help Albania or to undertake anything that might conflict with Italy's special interests in Albania, especially since Italy was prepared to abandon her military policy in Albania.

This information would seem to confirm the statement made to me by the German Chargé d'Affaires, Dr. Von Luckwald, reported in my despatch No. 771 of June 2, 1933,

665.7531/29

to

to the effect that Mussolini had protected himself with regard to Italy's influence in Albania, during the negotiations of the Four Power Pact, and that England and France had agreed to abide by the Ambassadors' Agreement of 1921, recognizing Italy's special interests in Albania.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

In triplicate.
Two extra copies.

HB/SJS
710.

4 Carbon Copies
Received

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 893. Tirana, October 12, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Isolated Albania.

DEPT. OF STATE DIV. COM. & REC.
OCT 26 1933
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 6 1933
DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
Office of Economic Adviser
NOV 8 1933
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FOR DISTRIBUTION
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
NOV 11 1933
MR BULLITT
775.00
768.75
875.51
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OCT 27 1933
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
NOV 14 1933
FILED
775.00/19

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to state that there is abroad in Tirana these days a growing sense of Albanian isolation. In all the recent rush of Balkan love-fests----- the Greco-Turk accord, the meeting at Sinaia, the tour of King Alexander, the busy scurryings from capital to capital of Prime and Foreign Ministers----- Albania is practically never mentioned, even in the most verbose press reports. She is cut off from the Little Entente because it is leagued with France, and France frowns upon any advances being made to Albania because of her own new courtship with Italy.

The

The Greek Minister, Mr. Diamandopoulos, raised this question with me today, speaking as follows: "Some Albanians----- not members of the Cabinet, but responsible people----- complained to me yesterday that Albania seemed to be 'left out' of all these new Balkan moves toward a rapprochement. I replied that, first of all, Greece is certainly the least deserving of all countries of a reproach of that sort; we have recently completed a commercial accord with Albania, the old question of the confiscated property of Albanians in Greece has now been settled, and we have been friendly in all respects. I told them that, in the second place, it can not be considered surprising if the other countries of the Balkans do not attempt to draw Albania to them when she is already linked with Italy. Albania is naturally considered apart from other Balkan countries because of her special relations with Italy. Italy would be annoyed if she were to find Albania leaning toward too close Balkan ties or if the other Balkan states were to beckon too urgently to Albania; the first move in either case would appropriately be notification to and agreement of Italy.

"Some time ago, when there was talk of an Adriatic pact between Italy and Yugoslavia, Djafer Villa expressed to me much the same feeling of loneliness. He asked me what would be the attitude of Greece, as an Adriatic state, with regard to such a pact. When I posed the question to my Government, the reply was that Greece did not consider herself to be an Adriatic state."

The recently returned Czechoslovakian Chargé d'Affaires,

Mr.

Mr. Vokac, expressed the same idea to me in even stronger terms: "Albania is now entirely isolated----- isolated from the other Balkan states, from the Little Entente, and from Italy. Mussolini is very angry with King Zog. Did you notice that Victor Emmanuel sent Zog a message of congratulations on his birthday, but that there was none from Mussolini? That is very significant. While the Pact of Tirana was in vigor Mussolini was constantly sending friendly messages to Zog, but there have been none since Zog refused to renew the Pact. Mussolini is very angry. And I can tell you, entirely confidentially, that when I was in Prague recently I was assured directly by Dr. Benes that the question of the Little Entente extending financial aid to Albania or becoming entangled with her politically is ruled out. That is authentic and definite. Commercial accords, perhaps yes; but financial or political ties, definitely no. Czechoslovakia alone can not help Albania, nor can Yugoslavia; the Little Entente can not because it is bound to France; and France does not wish to embroil herself with Italy."

The Yugoslav Minister, Mr. Djonovitch, who returned to Tirana a few days ago and had an audience with the King this morning, appears now to feel that Albania has little hope of securing financial aid from outside, either from Italy or the Little Entente or the League of Nations, and must look to the development of her own economic resources and the building up of a more favorable trade balance to bring her out of the present financial morass. His optimism regarding financial aid from his own Government

or

or the Little Entente seems to have disappeared. "Naturally Albania is isolated", he said in conversation with me this evening. "We cannot make a move in her behalf without Italy's flaring up. Yugoslavia can not bring money to Albania or enter into a political entente. I said to the King today, 'Let us not try the difficult and dangerous things first; let us begin with the more easy. We can negotiate a commercial treaty and assist Albania in that way.' Albania is facing a period of loneliness, economic struggle and poverty, but if thus she can win actual independence and economic prosperity it is the very best thing that could happen to her."

The statements made by both Mr. Djonovitch and Mr. Vokac, who have just returned from their respective capitals, seem to sound the death knell to any hopes that King Zog may have entertained as to the possibility of securing any aid from the Little Entente or from Yugoslavia other than, of course, through the negotiation of advantageous commercial treaties.

4 Carbon Copies
Received --- K.H.
2 copies in DCR - F.E.C.

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

CKH/SJS
710

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

SEE 875.00/380 FOR #898

FROM Albania ( Huston ) DATED Oct.16, 1933

TO NAME 1—1127

REGARDING:

"Albania's Foreign Relations".

Pamphlet entitled -, which was prepared by the Albanian PressBureau.

W1

875.00/20

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED
JUN 1 1934
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

G-2 Report

6-3
3850
2657-V 683

ALBANIA (Political)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 1 - 1934
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Subject : Foreign Relationships.
Albanian foreign relationships.

During recent years Albanian politics and Albanian foreign relations have been mainly concerned with Italy. Albania's other international problems naturally concern most her other two bordering neighbors, Yugoslavia and Greece. Leaving Italy aside for the moment, it may be said that Albania's relations with all other countries are friendly, cordial and normal, the chief sources of friction having been born of the delimitation of her territory by the great powers.

Yugoslavia.

The Albanian minorities in territory awarded to Yugoslavia by the Conference of Ambassadors (in October, 1924), not having been granted their own schools and other facilities usually solicited for minorities, sorely irks Albania. Nevertheless, they look at the matter realistically and do not make a burning problem of it. Albania has never been satisfied with the Yugoslavian boundary as fixed by the Conference of Ambassadors and has not, in fact, ever accorded it unreserved recognition.

Yugoslavia's wartime territorial aspirations in Albania have been practically forgotten, and frontier banditry and disorders have become rare. But Yugoslavia keeps a tensely watchful eye on Albania because of Italian activities here. Yugoslavia naturally sees in the Italian organization and militarization of Albania the molding of a weapon to be used against her in Italy's bruited policy of Balkan penetration. An entirely free and independent and stable Albania constitutes for Yugoslavia a valuable buffer state against Italy, whereas an Albania under Italian influence, using Italian money and organizers, politically bound to Italy and providing a complement to the Italian Army, is seen as a distinct menace. Her policy is therefore, directed towards seeing the loss of Italian influence and power in Albania. Yugoslavia would gladly avail herself of any opportunity to strengthen the little country's economic and financial position in order to draw it further out from under the Italian wing. For this reason the Belgrade capital has received most sympathetically the Albanian Government's recent overtures regarding the negotiation of a new commercial treaty between the two countries and has invited Albania to send a delegation to enter into immediate conversations.

Italy.

An indispensable condition to the preservation of Italian security in the Adriatic is the freedom of southern Albania from the domination or influence of any other great power. With the rocky island of Saseno in its possession, guarding the entrance to the Albanian Bay of Valona, and only 47 miles from the opposite Italian coast, Italy is in position to block, with its guns at Otranto and Saseno, the straits of Otranto. She thus has mastery of the Adriatic and effectively protects her long and vulnerable eastern coast line. While Italy today occupies the island of Saseno, Albania has never relinquished her rightful claim that it is Albanian territory.

It would transcend the limits of this report to give a full account

775.00/21

FILED
JUN 1 1934

From : M/A., Rome, Italy. Report N° 13842 April 25, 1934.

of the relations of Italy and Albania from the World War to the present time. To do so would require the writing of a history of Albania from the time of the great war, involving the intrigues and machinations of its voracious neighbors, to say nothing of the selfish interests of other great powers, culminating with the decided stand and wily political moves of Albania's King Zog.

To come down to the present time, note that by an agreement of the Conference of Ambassadors, at London, on November 9, 1921, Italy was given a special position in Albania. The powers represented in the Conference (Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) agreed that, in case Albania found it necessary to request assistance from the League of Nations in the maintenance of her territorial integrity, their representatives would "recommend that the restoration of the territorial frontiers of Albania should be entrusted to Italy." It should be noted, too, that an accord, in August 1919, between Italy and the then provisional Albanian Government at Durazzo recognized Italy's protectorate over Albania.

At various times Italy's special interests in Albania have been recognized by other powers and she has been able to build up a background for her pretensions in this country. In order to consolidate her position Italy began in 1925 to actively associate herself with the Albanian Government. In 1925 an arrangement was concluded for a loan to Albania, by an Italian financial group, of 50,000,000 gold francs, and in 1931, a loan of 100,000,000 francs by the Italian Government. A Pact of Friendship and Security was signed by the two countries in 1926, and a Treaty of Defensive Alliance in 1927.

From the foregoing considerations and others not mentioned, Italy evolves whatever justification she has for her Albanian policy. By 1930, Albania had fallen so far under the sway and influence of Italy that it is not surprising to find that it was often loosely spoken of and considered as, in many respects, an Italian colony or protectorate.

A partial list of Italian activities in Albania as of 1930 is enlightening :

(a) Italy was estimated to be spending about 200,000,000 lire annually in Albania.

(b) Italian military officers in Albania numbered, according to Yugoslav figures, 256 (Note : The number in April, 1934, according to General Myrdacz, Chief of Staff of the Albanian Army, is 70).

(c) Albania's tiny "Navy" was commanded by an Italian Naval officer with two Italian assistants.

(d) There were 2 Italian advisers in the Ministry of Finance and 24 others at tax collecting offices.

(e) An Italian engineer attached to the Ministry of Public Works had 86 Italian assistants scattered over the country.

(f) Three Italian experts were attached to the Ministry of National Economy.

(g) Italy had 28 instructors in physical education and 11 organizers and instructors in the Enti-Kombetar (National Youth Movement).

(h) Italy had acquired extensive oil field concessions and an oil selling monopoly for 20 years, in addition to an asphalt concession and numerous other mineral concessions.

Steering a middle course among the Albanian fears of Italian domination, the Yugoslav charge of evil and warlike designs on the part of Italy, and Italy's avowals of altruistic impulses in sponsoring the little Kingdom, one is inclined to hazard the opinion that, in a few simple words, Italy desires an independent Albania in which she can do as she pleases. Such an Albania must be ostensibly independent for the sake of appearances and should be unified and economically sound so as not to be a drain on the Italian treasury, but it is at the same time essential that Italian influence and power in the country be sufficiently great to preclude any form of penetration by any other great power, that the port of Vallona and the island of Saseno be always available as a part of Italy's system of National Defense, and that the country be quickly convertible into a military base and "bumper" in the event of future war operations in the Balkans.

Much has been said of Italy's military policy in Albania, which is only a practical execution of the aims mentioned above. General Alberto Pariani was the most conspicuous proponent of this policy, his tireless activities being almost entirely responsible for the Italian reorganization of the Albanian Army, the construction of fortifications, the building of strategic military roads and bridges, and, in short, the making of Albania into a veritable military base.

General Pariani was officially Italian Military Attaché to Albania, but he was decidedly more than that. He held the position of Chief of the Military Department of the King's court, he had a tremendous fund at his disposal, and he was unique among Italians in that he won the confidence, respect and liking of the Albanians. He was Mussolini's man in Albania and always out of tune with the Italian Ministers to Albania, who had sought his recall. After six years devoted to militaring Albania in the interests of Italy, he was recalled a year ago, and the Chief interest in his recall is centered in the question as to whether or not it indicated the end of the so-called Italian military policy in Albania. Italian officials claim that it did but there are many who claim that it is merely a strategic retreat to cover later advances.

The 100,000,000 franc loan (to be given at the rate of 10,000,000 francs a year for 10 years) by Italy was cut by three millions in the fiscal year 1931-32, by over two millions in 1932-33, and now has been entirely stopped by Italy unless Albania agrees to certain demands which are entirely unsatisfactory to the latter. The result then is a deadlock. Italy continues to wait for signs of friendship and collaboration which King Zog refuses to give, and so the situation remains today. With a large budget deficit to care for and little revenue, the cutting off of the loan means financial distress to this little country and speculation is ripe as to whether or not it can carry on without financial aid. The present Italian pose is one of indifference, while Albania is making a show of buckling down and living on her own resources by reducing expenditures and improving her economic position.

J. G. PILLOW,
Colonel, Cav., U.S.A.,
Military Attaché.

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

775.00/22

SEE 875.00/398 FOR Information Series #54

FROM State Department (NAME) DATED Nov.9, 1934

TO Current Information Div.

1—1127

REGARDING: Albania.

Italian special interests. Italian loan. Ambassador's Agreement of Paris of 1920. Treaty of Tirana. Yugoslav attitude. American interests.

MILITARY ATTACHE
American Embassy

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED
DEC 14 1934
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

G-2 Report

2657 / 683
3850
6 3
3

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEC 13 1934
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

ALBANIA (Political)

Subject : Foreign Relationships.
Albanian Foreign Relationships.

775.00/23

Reference is made to Report No. 13842-3850, April 25, 1934, on the same subject, particularly to the last paragraph thereof, showing Albania's dependence on financial assistance for her economic life.

Several things have transpired and several situations arisen recently which incline this office to a very strong belief that the strained relations between Italy and Albania are being relaxed and a resumption of the former rapprochement is in sight. The advantages of a closer relationship between the two countries are perhaps so evident that each is willing to compromise on matters that brought on an impasse in their relationship.

The main source of information on the subject is a report of the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ad Interim to Albania, of November 16, 1934, copy of which was furnished the American Ambassador at Rome. The writer records what seems to him a distinct change of atmosphere, and mentions, in substance, the following items as indicating a possibility of resumption of the former relationship of the two countries:

a. The departure of the former Italian Minister to Albania, Signor Koch, and the arrival of his successor, Signor Indelli, who was well received and liked, given an early audience by King Zog (and not subject to the irritation of a long wait, customary with the King), and given an official dinner by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which was attended by the most prominent officials, Albanian and foreign. The King also indicated, confidentially, his preference for Signor Indelli as president of the Royal Tennis Club, of which he is honorary president.

b. The return to Rome of Signor Indelli, whose departure coincided with that of Colonel Zef Bereggi, First Adjutant to the King, which led to the belief by some of the foreign diplomats at Tirana that negotiations were actively, though secretly in progress (NOTE : For discussion in this connection, see paragraph below referring to General Pariani).

c. King Zog is reported to have said to the British Minister a few days ago "Why should Albania join the Balkan Entente, when the other Balkan countries do nothing to enable her to escape the bonds of Italian enterprise ?" The Greek Minister (who reported this quotation) added that if the King is not leaning towards the Entente, it may be inferred that he is leaning towards Italy. The Albanian Foreign Minister, Villa, expressed very much the same idea to the French Chargé d'Affaires by saying, "We have waited a long time for you to help us or for Yugoslavia to help us, but nothing has happened; so - ", concluding with a gesture interpreted as pointing towards Italy.

d. King Zog has not only national but personal interests to safeguard. There is general discontent with the lack of money, non payment of salaries, and the general poverty. Recently concluded commercial accords have shown negative results in the nation's treasury. "Money is speaking to King Zog with a loud voice and beckons from across the Adriatic".

It was plainly evident that the assassination of King Alexander on October 9, 1934, increased the tension of the strained relations between Italy and Yugoslavia, two countries which play unceasingly for the favor of Albania - of which the wily King Zog takes full advantage. Yugoslavia is thought to have charged Italy (though not openly, as it did Hungary) with harboring and assisting camps of malcontent Reds, anarchists, assassins, and like breeds from other countries, and particularly from Yugoslavia, who have (as one objective) the fomenting of disorder, strife,

discord, and dissatisfaction with the Yugoslavian Government. The high tension, delicate situation, and uncertainty at this critical time would seem to cause Italy to take stock of its military preparedness, one of the main items of which is always the use of Albanian territory as a base of operations against the Balkan countries. In this situation it would be politic for Italy to abandon its pose of indifference towards Albania and placate King Zog. Whether money was passed - the great desideratum of King Zog - is not known to this office.

In connection with the paragraph, above, referring to the return to Rome of the Italian Minister to Albania, Signor Indelli, and Colonel Lef Gereggi, attention is invited to the next to last paragraph of our Report ITALY No. 13842-3850, wherein is given a short resume of General Pariani's position and work in Albania. General Pariani was recently appointed Assistant Chief of the General Staff (see Report No. 14072-6210, October 3, 1934)at the time of relief of General Bonzani as Chief of Staff. No new Chief of Staff has been appointed, and it is the opinion of this office that General Pariani will be given that position. In Albania, he was a diplomat as well as a great organizer, administrator and soldier. While in Albania, in April, 1934, the Military Attaché formed the opinion that his recall was due (certainly in part) to the jealousy of the then Italian Minister to Albania, some of whose legitimate functions were performed by General Pariani. This was not due to usurpation of authority on the part of General Pariani but to his being liked by the Albanians, from the King to minor officials, and their preference to refer matters to him rather than to the Minister.

It is not unreasonable to infer that General Pariani, as military advisor to the Head of the Italian Government, may have, in view of possible military operations against Yugoslavia, suggested to Mussolini the advisability of a conference with the Italian Minister to Albania and a military representative of King Zog. Hence the visit to Rome of Signor Indelli and Colonel Lef Gereggi. In view of the excellent results accomplished by General Pariani during his six years in Albania in cementing close relations between the two countries, that he had the confidence of King Zog and of Mussolini, his counsel at this time would seem to be of value. On the occasion of his reception, as new Assistant Chief of Staff, to the military attaches in Rome he gave the impression of being a very capable and forceful man.

J. K. Pillow,
Colonel, Cav., U. S. A.,
Military Attaché.

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

775.00/24

SEE 875.00/443 FOR #6

FROM Albania ( Grant ) DATED Nov.29, 1935

TO NAME

1—1127

REGARDING: Foreign policy of Albania.

Statements of Foreign Minister Aslani concerning -, particularly as concerns Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia.

No. 6 Tirana, November 29, 1935.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Present Foreign and Domestic Policy of the Albanian Government.

875.00/445

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report upon the subject of the present foreign and domestic policy of Albania, as revealed in a conversation which I had today with Dr. Fuad Aslani, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, and as deduced from a series of events which have occurred since my arrival at this post on November 2, 1935.

~~875.918~~ ~~.51~~

775.00 ~~765.84~~ ~~765.75~~

It may be recalled from telegram No. 23 of October 21, 2 p.m., that the new Government was formed by Mehdi Bey Frasheri on that date, succeeding the Evangheli Cabinet. As indicated in my dispatch No. 1 of November 11, 1935, the new Foreign Minister arrived in Tirana

from

from London, where he served as Minister, two days subsequent to my arrival. Sufficient time it would appear, therefore, has elapsed for the necessary series of Cabinet conferences and formulation of general policies. Such is the case, I believe. Trends are now beginning to be apparent, if one may judge from the remarks today of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and from events of the last few days.

In the first place, as reported in my telegram No. 29 of November 28, 1935, one hundred and eleven political prisoners, one hundred and eight of whom were connected with the recent Fier Revolutionary Movement, were pardoned outright by the King in two edicts issued yesterday, the twenty-third Anniversary Day of Albanian Independence. For details of this Act of Amnesty, see despatch No. 7 of this date. Dr. Aslani informed me confidentially today that the other prisoners, numbering approximately one hundred and forty would also be released soon. He added the significant statement that "we want to forget the past"; and that expression it would appear, is the key-note of the domestic program outlined by King Zog and his new group of advisers. Zog has inaugurated a New Deal for Albania. If he only had funds there is no telling how far he might go. Unquestionably, as I pointed out in my narrative of the audience with His Majesty (despatch No. 1, November 11, 1935) the man, in my judgment, is sincerely desirous of pulling this poverty-stricken little country from the economic and social

depths

depths into which it has been plunged as the result of age-old feuds, ancient customs, war and invasion. Youthful and ambitious the King is looking forward, desperately anxious to blot out the sordid past. Mute testimony of this fact is the release yesterday of Nurodin Vlora, an important political figure, former Mayor of Valona, who was accused of having plotted to overthrow Zog, in the most recent revolutionary movement, and to have himself proclaimed King of the Albanians and who subsequent to his arrest tried to commit suicide. Vain and personally ambitious Absolute Monarchs do not adopt such tactics, if I know my history.

Furthermore the Albanian New Deal, as far as the directing heads of the Government are concerned, is no mere fiction, as indicated in Despatch No. 454 of October 24, 1935. Zog, in his desire to forget the past, as Dr. Aslani termed it, threw out all except two of the old timers in the old Cabinet including, to the consternation of many, several powerful men who say the same Moslem prayers that His Majesty has recited from his early youth. There are already, to my certain knowledge, some rumblings in Mohammedan circles, to the effect that there are too many "Christian Dogs" in the new Government. Only three members of the present Cabinet are Moslems. Zog, a worshiper of Allah, must surely have anticipated this repercussion. To go ahead, notwithstanding, required courage.

That there is little, if any "politics" in the present domestic program of the new Government, is indicated also

in

in the policy adopted regarding the Government functionaries, as outlined to me by Dr. Aslani. I had heard a rumor from a reliable source that there are other rumblings against the new régime, because members of the "old guard" in the villages, appointees of the former administration, have not been dismissed. The Foreign Minister explained that the new Government has no intention of conducting a wholesale house cleaning involving government personnel. "I have made no change in my office", he declared, "and do not anticipate making changes soon. Our policy is to develop an effecient personnel, retaining employees of the former Government if they are capable".

"We have had only a change of Cabinet", he added pointedly, "much like the Cabinet changes that occur in England". It may be recalled that Dr. Aslani spent two years as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James, where, I am informed by the British Minister here, he made an excellent impression because he recognized the correct role to be adopted by the representative of a small state.

To those persons who regard Albania as a mere puppet state of Italy, taking her money, adopting her customs, ready to be swallowed up, it may be pointed out that the theory of the new functionary program in Albania, as described by the Foreign Minister, was certainly not borrowed from the Fascist régime. Likewise the new "Youth Movement" launched by the Government under the direction of the Minister of Interior for the purpose

of

of "reorganizing the administration of the Albanian Government according to the ideals of New Government of the Youth", according to a release by the newly organized Press Bureau, may sound Fascist to some, and, perhaps, one bright morning we may see an outcropping of little black shirts in Tirana, but the skeptics should recall our own highly organized scouts, male and female, in America, and our more recent New Deal program for the youth of the States. It is of interest to note that the active head of this new program, in which, I am reliably informed, the King is intensely interested, is Mr. Ismet Toto, brother of the Minister of the Interior, who spent three years at the American Junior Red Cross Technical School at Tirana. It may be recalled in Despatch No. 1 of November 11 that the King, in his conversation with me, expressed a very favorable opinion of the work of this organization.

There are other indications of the New Deal Policy, for instance the easing of the rigid press censorship, exemplified in the resumption on November 28, Albanian Independence Day, of the publication of the ARBËNIA, a newspaper suppressed in 1931 and the editor Nebil Chika, driven from the gallery of the Parliament which he had attacked (see despatch 181 of January 29, 1931). The desire for change has even reached to age-old customs of the streets and highways, an order being issued for fines as the reward of peasants who ride while their wives walk behind the tiny Albanian donkeys. Nor shall sellers of

sweetmeats

sweetmeats, who cater to tourists, it is reported, continue to carry their trays on their heads and linger in the frequented streets.

So much for the internal program of the New Deal Government. What of the Foreign Policy, of particular importance in this period of League Sanctions against Albania's near neighbor, Italy? Dr. Aslani, capable Diplomat, fresh from London, charming in manner, described as the cornerstone of the Government's present Foreign Policy (1) the earnest desire to have Albania live in peace and harmony with her neighbors; (2) maintain her position as a member of the League of Nations, which, he declared is the "hope of small Nations"; and (3) develop the country within her present boundary limits.

Regarding point 1, Dr. Aslani said, "Albania is surrounded by neighbors who are jealous of each other". I gave a significant sign of understanding, naming Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece, and he nodded affirmatively. This situation places Albania in a difficult position. Point 2, cooperation with the League of Nations, of which Albania is a member, is vital to the little country and here, Albania's position has recently been rendered extremely difficult and delicate as the result of her refusal at Geneva to go along with the League in its program of Sanctions against Italy. The Foreign Minister hastened to add that Albania had deserted the League on the question of Sanctions "reluctantly" but had no alternative because of geographic considerations---proximity to Italy, whom, I inferred from his remarks, Albania fears. The Albanian-

Italo

Italo Treaty of Defensive Alliance of 1927 was of only secondary importance in the matter. Albania is too defenseless and too close to her ambitious neighbor across the Adriatic to feel comfortable. While he did not so state, I gathered that behind the scenes last October, on the eve of the historic Assembly vote at Geneva, tremendous pressure was brought to bear upon Albania by the Fascist régime. "We could not do otherwise", the Minister solemnly declared. However Albania's vote is understood by the League, Dr. Aslani believes. In fact he himself while still serving as Minister in London, discussed the matter with Sir Samuel Hoare and with Eden, both of whom understand Albania's vote.

With respect to point 3, developing the country within present boundaries, the Foreign Minister said there was no intention of recognizing a policy of irredentism in the matter of Albanian populations in the neighboring countries, Yugoslavia and Greece. "All we want and all we shall ask for is that Albanians in these countries be treated like human beings. We shall be entirely satisfied to develop Albania within her present boundaries".

Reverting to Albanian-Italo relations, having been prompted by a new crop of rumors to the effect that additional money "advances" have been made to Albania by Italy, I sounded the Minister upon this obscure and foggy subject and while I received the impression that the genial Minister would rather not talk about the matter, I did illicit the information that there have been no recent

"advances",

"advances", to the Minister's knowledge, that a total of 75,000,000 gold francs had been "advanced", that most of it had been "foolishly spent" by the former Government and, further that the present Government would endeavor to spend more wisely. Albania is not self-sufficient and must therefore obtain outside financial help for a period. It is unwise to incur debts, but again for Albania there is no alternative. However, Albania really does not owe Italy anything for the money advanced was for Italy's benefit, for her workmen were employed, her products were utilized and so the actual profits flowed to Italy.

Summarizing the Foreign Minister's views, Albania will be happy if she is let alone, desires peace with her neighbors and the protective wing of the League in case of an emergency, and being economically insufficient, will not refuse continued financial assistance of her neighbor on the other side of the Adriatic, but devoutly hopes there may be no impairment of her independence.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh O. Grant

Copies to Rome, London
and Geneva.

HGG/ajs
800/or 710

A true copy of the signed original.

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

875.00/25

SEE 875.0011/14 FOR #35

FROM Albania ( Grant ) DATED Jan.12, 1936

TO NAME

1—1127

REGARDING:

Marriage of Princess Senije, sister of King Zog of Albania, to Prince Abid, son of the late Sultan of Turkey.

Refusal of Ministers of Turkey, Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia to attend - because of Turkish resentment at the wedding. Belief that the Italians engineered the wedding.

Wi

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, February 22, 1936.

DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JUN 15 1936
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

No. 57

SUBJECT: Albania Resumes Negotiations With Her Neighbors; The Minister of Foreign Affairs visits Geneva, Paris and London and Talks with Mussolini in Rome; and King Zog's Confidential Adviser Plans a Trip to Belgrade.

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK Yes No
To the Field
In U. S. A.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

775.00/26

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 12 1936
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

1 copy NE

1936 MAR 11 PM 1 35
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

775.00 note 765.75 875.51

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER
JUN 16 1936
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

500.C02/5

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my telegrams No. 5 of January 15, 1936, 2 p.m. and No. 9 of February 5, 1936, 9 p.m. regarding the visit to Geneva of Dr. Fuad Aslani, the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the decision of the Albanian Parliament to establish a division for League of Nations' Affairs in the Foreign Office. 875.02 1/3 I now have the honor to report that Dr. Aslani has returned to Tirana following a tour which included Paris, London and Rome as well as Geneva. In Paris Aslani talked with Flandin, in London, while attending the funeral of the late King George, he conferred with Eden, and in Rome he made

FILED
JUN 22 1936

made his first official call as Foreign Minister upon Mussolini. As indicated in my telegram No. 9 of February 5, Aslani broadened the scope of the purpose of his tour, as announced prior to his departure from Tirana, from a discussion with officials of the League regarding the Albanian Minority School Question, to general conversations with respect to Albanian relationship with the League, as well as her security and financial condition.

A few days subsequent to Aslani's return last week I learned that Mehmed Bey Konitza, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, former Minister to London, and for some time now unofficial and confidential adviser to King Zog, has planned to proceed to Belgrade for conversations with Yugoslav and perhaps other Balkan officials on matters of vital concern to Albania. I have talked with both Aslani and Konitza as well as with several of my Diplomatic Colleagues of the Balkan States who are vitally concerned with the question of Albania's relationship with their respective countries. From these conversations I submit the following deductions -

(1) Albania, in the face of obstacles created by jealous neighbors and through the necessity of seeking outside financial assistance, intends to maintain her independent status at all odds.

(2) Albania, charged with deserting the League by her vote against the sanctions applied to Italy last October, now plans to effect a closer cooperation with Geneva through such measures as the creation of a special division in the Foreign Office for the handling of matters

<u>relating</u>

relating to the League. This piece of Legislation was recently adopted by the Parliament in record time while Aslani was still away and it is thought perhaps upon receipt of telegraphic advice here.

(3) Albania, charged with being decidedly pro-Italian, as the result of the Treaty of Defensive Alliance with Italy, the recent Sanctions vote, and heavy financial assistance from Italy in the past, intends to attempt to tip the scales slightly in the other direction through renewed overtures to Yugoslavia, and probably other members of the Balkan Entente. Konitza who is going to Belgrade is President of the Albanian Committee of the Balkan Conference and has no love for Italy.

(4) Albania will continue to seek outside financial assistance from whomsoever will offer it, with a minimum of "strings" attached.

(5) Negotiations for financial assistance will be hastened since the annual budget is now being prepared for the new fiscal year which begins April 1.

With regard to points (1) and (2) Aslani in his conversation with me declared with emphasis, that "notwithstanding rumors to the contrary" his country desires and intends to retain its independent status. His remark is significant in that it was made two days subsequent to his arrival from Rome where he discussed Italo-Albanian relations with Mussolini. Aslani said he paid a "courtesy call" upon Il Duce, but admitted the conversation turned upon several matters, including the question of finances and trade relations between the two countries.

"It is

"It is important that we go along with the League", the Foreign Minister asserted, "but because of our geographical situation we must be friendly with Italy and we shall need further financial assistance."

I ventured to interpose the remark that in my judgment, there would be fewer "rumors" regarding the independent status of Albania if all loans advanced by Italy were made a matter of public record.

"You mean not so much secrecy?", Aslani querried, and I nodded in the affirmative, whereupon he said, "Yes, I know what you mean."

Reverting to his conversation with Mussolini, Aslani added that Il Duce had thanked him for Albania's vote against the Sanctions. Referring to the Italian-Ethiopian War, the Foreign Minister declared that from his observations at Geneva it seemed to him that the League was deliberately piling up Committees on top of Committees in order to delay further positive action against Italy at this time, that there appeared to be a disposition to wait to see the results of the rainy season in Abysinnia.

"After all", Aslani added significantly, perhaps reflecting views he heard expressed in Geneva, "no one wants to see a colored race win victories over a white nation."

With regard to points (3) and (4) it would appear that Zog and his advisers are timing their negotiations for financial aid and support with the view of repeating the old game of playing Italy against Yugoslavia and the Balkans and, more important, for the purpose of obtaining the largest

concession

concession possible with the least number of "strings" attached. Konitza will seek to obtain an extension of credit through the Yugoslav bank in Tirana which has never functioned in the interest of Albania. He probably will discuss also the question of the tobacco monopoly in Albania which has come to life again after lying dormant for many months, and for which Yugoslavia, Italy and England have submitted bids; and he may explore the possibility of strengthening the ties between Albania and the members of the Balkan Entente.

In the meantime Albania is seeking a new loan from Italy and at the same time desires to come to an agreement with her financial benefactor whereby the old loans, approximating some twelve and a half million dollars according to estimate, may be cleared from the books. It may be recalled from my despatch No. 6 of November 29, 1935, that Aslani advanced the theory that Albania does not owe Italy anything, since the money was used for Italy's benefit through the employment of Italian laborers and the utilization of Italian products.

The next few weeks may bring forth some interesting developments in Albania's political and economic situation.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant

Hugh G. Grant

Copies to Rome, Belgrade
and Geneva.

HGG:gaj
710/cr 800/851

4 Carbon copies
Received E.P.
1 copy for Mr.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Tirana, Albania,
January 19, 1937

DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
FEB 12 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1937 FEB 6 PM 12 10

No. 288

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

SUBJECT: Evidence of Attempt to Extend German Influence in Albania.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 8 1937
DIVISION OF FOREIGN SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-C/C
FEB 10 1937
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR DISTRIBUTION - ...
To the ...
In U. S. A.
Polit.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 8 1937
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

775.00/27

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

775.00
note
762.75

Sir:

FILED
FEB 13 1937

I have the honor to inform the Department that there is increasing evidence of the extension here of the influence of the new group of Central European states, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy. Von Pannwitz, the new German Minister, fresh from the Reich Foreign Office and, incidentally, a personality apparently of some influence, following a visit to Rome two weeks ago, at a luncheon at the German Legation this week decorated Dr. Nush Bushati, former Albanian Minister of Education, with the order "Deutsche Olympia Ehrenzeichen".

Von Pannwitz, I am informed made an appropriate speech on the occasion, extolling Doctor Bushati's qualifications and referring to his friendship for Germany. It may be

pointed

pointed out that Bushati visited Germany last summer, remaining away from his post of duty here for nearly two months. The former Minister, entertaining me at tea a few days ago, remarked that he had been very cordially received in Germany by a number of the Nazi leaders, including Chancellor Hitler and Premier-President Goering. Bushati is a Deputy in the Albanian Parliament and is a candidate for re-election in the elections the latter part of this month.

I am also reliably informed that a number of German agents are touring Albania and making inquiries of the people regarding their views upon the present political situation in Albania.

Further possible evidence of the flirting with Albania by the Central Powers is the visit this week of the Austrian Minister to Greece and Albania, Baron Lothaire Wimmer, who resides in Athens. The Baron visited the Albanian Foreign Office and was a guest at tea at the home of Foreign Minister, Ekrem Libohova. Ostensibly he was not interested in his Diplomatic Colleagues for he made no calls upon them, merely sending his cards. His act has been the subject of unfavorable comment in Diplomatic circles.

As reported in the Legation's despatch No. 875.001Bog/101 276 of January 5, 1937, the Hungarian Minister to Rome and Albania, Baron Villani, visited Tirana a few weeks ago in company with other Hungarians including Countess Hanna Mikes, niece of Count Bethlen, former Prime Minister of Hungary. Baron Villani also failed to call on his Diplomatic Colleagues, nor did he leave cards.

Respectfully yours,

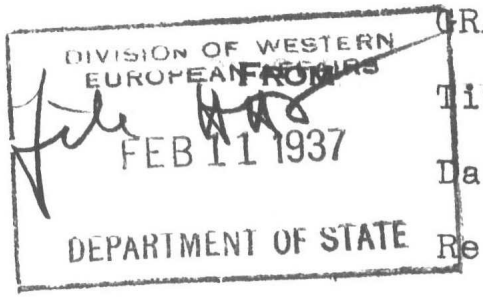
Hugh G. Grant.

HGG:jwd
701.1

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

U

1—1336




FROM

GRAY

Tirana

Dated February 10, 1937

Rec'd 1 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

3, February 10, 1 p.m.

In addressing new parliament today King Zog promised continuation of friendly relations with neighboring nations declaring that "particularly with our big ally, Italy", there shall be sincere and continuous cooperation.

GRANT

CSB

775.00/28

FILED
FEB 12 1937

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

775.00/29

SEE 760h.65/707 FOR #218

FROM Italy ( Phillips ) DATED Feb.18, 1937
TO NAME

1—1127

REGARDING: Guarantee of the existing status of Albania.

Statement of Yugoslav Minister that negotiations between Italy and Yugoslavia for improvement of relations would include subject of -.

Wi

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,
February 16, 1937.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 24 1937
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

No. 315

SUBJECT: Competition Among European Powers for Albanian Favor Increases.

DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MAR 27 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL - For Staff Only.

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK
To the Field
In D. C.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1937 MAR 23 PM 3 51
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

ASSISTANT CHIEF
MAR 31 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 288 of January 19, 1937, regarding the attempt to extend German influence in Albania. I now have the honor to inform the Department that there are indications of increasing competition among European powers in the matter of flirting with Albania for the latter's favor. The Republic of France has entered the lists. The French Minister, a very modest, retiring type of Diplomat, recently gave a large dinner for the purpose of decorating the Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ekrem Libohova, with the insignia of the grade of the Order of the French Legion of

775.00/30
FILED
MAR 31 1937
FILED
MAR 30 1937

of Honor. Libohova has served as Albanian Minister to France.

The Albanian Prime Minister was present and made a speech in which he echoed the words of the French Minister, declaring that "we attach the greatest significance to these sentiments which will strengthen and bring closer the century-old bonds which exist between our two countries." And further, "The distinction which is of the highest accorded to my Colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, constitutes new evidence of the friendly sentiments which the Government of the (French) Republic nourishes toward the Government which I have the honor to be the head."

I might mention also that both the new Turkish Minister and the new Yugoslav Minister, following their initial audiences with His Majesty the King, hastened to the imposing Tomb of the Queen Mother where in great solemnity they placed large and costly wreaths. A few months ago when the European tension was not so acute, the predecessors of these particular diplomatic gentlemen were arrogantly "walking out" on the King's party given in honor of the wedding of his sister (see Legation's despatch No. 177 of July 22, 1936, and previous despatches). 875.0011/25

But that is water over the dam! My new Turkish Colleague, Bay Aali Türkgeldi, said as much to me when he called to pay his respects after being received by the King. "That unpleasantness is finished", he said with some emphasis.

The competition for Albanian favor has even been extended into the realm of charity, thanks to the cleverness of the Albanians. One day last week a committee, headed by the former spy of Musa Juka, hard-boiled Minister

of

of Interior, made hasty calls on the Legations seeking subscriptions for a Saturday night charity ball sponsored by one of the King's systers, Princess Myzejen. The next morning a list of Legation donors with the amounts donated was published in headlines in the Government-controlled newspaper, the DRITA. The Italians headed the list with 500 gold francs (approximately $160). The Yugoslavs were "runners-up" with 200 gold francs. I am reliably informed that both of these Legations have sizeable subsidies which may be passed around for various and sundry purposes without any specific accounting.

1/ Copies of the newspaper articles, with English translations, regarding the decoration of the Minister for Foreign Affairs by the French Government are enclosed herewith.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant.

1 carbon copy
Received

Enclosure:
1/ Translation and clipping.

HGG:jwd
701.1

Enclosure No. 1 of despatch No. 315
of February 16, 1937, from the
American Legation, Tirana, Albania.

From the ARBENIA and the DRITA of January 30, 1937:

FOREIGN MINISTER EKREM LIBOHOVA DECORATED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

The French Minister Gave a Dinner for the Occasion at Which Cordial Speeches Were Exchanged

Night before last by occasion of the decoration of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H. E. Ekrem Bey Libohova, with the insignia of the grade of Grand Officer of the Order of the Legion of Honor, the French Minister, H. E. Louis Mercier and Mme. Mercier gave a dinner, the participants at which were the Members of the Government, the President of the Council of State, the Director of Ceremonies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with his Assistant and the wives of those invited.

The delivery of the decoration was made with a special ceremony provided by the Regulations of the Order.

In delivering the decoration the French Minister delivered an address in which he pointed out the zeal with which the Minister for Foreign Affairs fulfilled his diplomatic mission near the French Government.

H. E. Ekrem Bey Libohova replied expressing his thanks, praying the French Minister to convey his most cordial sentiments to the French Government.

At the conclusion of the dinner the French Minister directed an address full of sympathy to the Head of the Government, who replied to this expression.

The French Minister's address follows:

"Mr. Prime Minister,

"Ladies and Gentlemen:

"You were kind enough to honor this assembly around my modest table for which I thank you.

"I have been of the opinion that, really, we cannot find a better way to see each other except by meeting 'to cut the loaf of bread', according to a tradition which has been spread almost world wide.

"At this moment when you, together with a new Parliament, will valiantly set yourself at work to the end of putting

into

into action the program which His Majesty King Zog I was good enough to indicate during a banquet as a step more and more fixed toward occidental advancement, I deem it proper to express to you my whole sympathy and to assure you of my desire of sincere cooperation.

"I am happy, on the other hand, that my Government had the kindness to charge me with the delivery to one who is among you, H. E. Ekrem Bey Libohova, the special insignia of its very high appreciation of the way in which His Excellency fulfilled, during many years, his diplomatic mission at Paris.

"I invite you to raise glasses for the health of His Majesty King Zog I, for the success of His program which indicates also your programs in your respective departments, and for the long life of the Koço Kotta Cabinet and its distinguished Members."

The Prime Minister's address follows:

"Mr. Minister:

"The sentiments which Your Excellency has just expressed to me for the work of advancement which, under the support of Our August Sovereign, I and my colleagues have before us to do, have touched me deeply.

"Your sympathy toward this work and the cooperation which you are good enough to give to it makes me particularly happy.

"We attach the greatest significance to these sentiments which will strengthen and bring closer the century old bonds which exist between our two countries.

"The distinction, which is of the highest, accorded to my colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs, constitutes new evidence of the friendly sentiments which the Government of the (French) Republic nourishes toward the Government which I have the honor to be the head of.

"I raise my glass for the health of Mr. President of the Republic, for the prosperity of the great French nation and for the health of Mme Mercier and Your Excellency."

Enclosure No. 1 of despatch No. 575
of February 16, 1937, from the
American Legation, Tirana, Albania.

# E. T. Ministri Jashtëm Ekrem Libohova u dekorua prej Qeverrisë franceze

## Me këtë rast E. T. Ministri i Francës shtroi një darkë ku u shkëmbyen fjalime të përzemërta

Pardje me rastin e dekorimit të Ministrit të Punëve të Jashtme E. T. Z. Ekrem Bej Líbohova me shenjat e gradës s'Oficerit të Madh t' Urdhërit të Legjionit të Nderit, Ministri i Francës E. T. Z. Louis Mercier edhe Zonja Mercier dhanë një darkë, ku muarën pjesë Misat e Qeverisë, Kryetari i Këshillit të Shtetit, Drejtor' i Ceremonivet i Ministrisë së Punëvet të Jashtme me Ndihmësin e tij, si edhe Zonjat e të ftuarvet.

Dorëzimi i dekoratës u bë me një ceremoni të posaçme të paraparë në Regulloren e Urdhërit.

Dyke dorëzuar dekoratën Ministri i Francës mbajti një fjalim, në të cilin theksoi zellin, me të cilin Ministri i Punëvet të Jashtme mbushi misionin e tij Diplomatik pranë Qeverisë Franceze.

E. T. Z. Ekrem Bej Libohova u përgjegj, dyke çfaqur falënderimet e tij e dyke i u lutur Ministrit të Francës t'i transmetojë Qeverisë Franceze ndjenjat e tij më të përzemërta.

Në mbarim të bukës Ministri i Francës i drejtoi një fjalë plot simpathi Kryetarit të Qeverisë, i cili u përgjegj fjalëvet të shprehura.

*Fjala e E. T. Ministrit të Francës*

Zoti Kryeministër,

Zonja,

Zotërinj,

„Zotërija Juaj pattë mirësinë t'a nderoni me ardhjen t'Uaj këtë mbledhje rreth tryezës s'ime t'urtë edhe për këtë gjë u falem nderjes.

"Kam qënë i mendimit se, vërtetë, nuk do të mundim të gjejim mënyrë tjetër më të këndëshme për t'u parë, veçse dyke u mbledhur „për të prerë bukën", si pas një zakoni, gati, te përhapur ne gjithë botën.

"Në grimën, kur Zotërija e Juaj, sëbashpu me një Parlament të përtëritur, me trimëri do t'i përvisheni së shpejti punës, me qëllim që të shtini në zbatim programin, të cilin Nalt Madhnija e Tij Mbreti Zog I pati mirësinë t'a tregojë, gjatazi një banketi, si një ecje tepër e më tepër të vendosur drejt përparimit perëndimuer, e shoh t'udhës t'U çfaq gjithë simpathinë t'ime edhe t'u siguroj për dëshirën t'ime të bashkëpunimit të sinqertë.

"Jam i lumtur, nga tjetra anë, që Qeverija ime pati mirësinë të më ngarkojë për t' i dorëzuar njërit midis jush, E. T. Z. Eqrem Bej Libohova, shënjën e veçantë të të çmuarit të saj shumë të lartër të menyrés, me të cilën Ekselenca e Tij mbushi, gjatazi shumë vjetëvet, misionin e tij diplomatik në Paris.

"U grish të ngreni gotat për shëndetin e Nalt-Madhnisë së Tij Mbretit Zog I, për suksesin e programit të Tij, që do të shënojë edhe programin e t'uaj në dikasteret t'uaj respektive edhe për jetën e gjatë të Kabinetit Koço Kotta e të Misavet të tij të çquar."

*Fjala e E. T. Kryeministrit*

"Zoti Ministër,

"Ndjenjat, q'Ekselenca Juaj

(Vijon në faqen 4 shtylla 5)

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

775.00/31

SEE 760h.65/710 FOR Tel.124, 4 p.m.

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Mar.24, 1937

TO NAME

1—1127 o.r.o.

REGARDING: Status of Albania.

Visit of Count Ciano to Belgrade during which question of agreement with respect to - will be discussed.

Wi

WE
NE

LMS
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (B)

Rome

Dated March 24, 1937

Rec'd 3:10 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

124, March 24, 4 p. m.

My telegram 119, March 23, 1 p. m.; and despatch No. 218 of February 18th.

I called on the British Ambassador this morning and asked him whether he had any information with regard to Ciano's visit to Belgrade. He replied that there were five interesting points under discussion between the Italian and Yugoslav Governments:

One. The disposition of the terrorists camps concentrated in Italy. He believed that some satisfactory formula would be reached but he had doubts whether the Italians would in fact break up the camps.

860H.4016 Italians

Two. The question of minorities, that is the treatment of Italians living in Yugoslavia just across the Italian border.

865.4016

Three. The treatment of Yugoslavs living on the Italian side of the frontier. These two questions are being dealt with separately on account of differences in the respective situations.

Four.

740.H.65/710

660H.6531

775.00

Four. A commercial agreement which Ciano is expected to sign during his visit.

Five. An agreement with respect to Albania which will probably take the form of a mutual guaranty by Yugoslavia and Italy of the independence of the Albanian State.

In addition to these five points Drummond believes that Italy and Yugoslavia will sign a political agreement in the nature of a treaty of friendship. He is ignorant of its terms. So far as the British Government is concerned they would welcome any such understanding between the two countries because they had no fear it would in any way affect unfavorably the relations of his own Government with the Italian and Yugoslav Governments. For three years both London and Paris had been urging on Rome and Belgrade some such mutual undertaking. Now, however, according to Drummond, the French are no longer enthusiastic about it. He feared that a rapprochement of this nature would even be resented in Paris and that this would be most unfortunate.

PHILLIPS

CSB

# DOCUMENT FILE

# NOTE

SEE 875.00/476 FOR #321

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED Feb.16, 1937

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Speech of King Zog before Parliament in which he referred to continuous and sincere cooperation with Italy.

775.00/32

32

Wi

Central File: Decimal File 775.00, Political Relations Of States, Relations; Bi-Lateral Treaties., Albania And The World, July 31, 1930 - March 24, 1937. July 31, 1930 - March 24, 1937. MS Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1944: Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations of Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, 1930-1939. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5111390845%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 21 June 2025.